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The Pulpit

A Journal of Contemporary Preaching

E. G. Homrighausen:

A TEACHING CHURCH

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MAY, 1953

By E. G. Homrighausen

MOVING TOWARD A

THE June, 1952 issue of The Pulpit carried two articles on the need for a teaching church. The arresting titles were put in the form of questions: "Should the Minister Also Be a Teacher?" by Robert S. Eccles, and "Is Your Sunday School Hurting Your Church?" by Granger E. Westberg. The article by Eccles stated the case for a teaching pastor in a clear, masterful and persuasive way. Protestantism demands an intelligent laity, and the chief teacher of every congregation of Christians is the minister.

The article by Westberg deplored the present cold war between the Sunday school and the church, between the lay church and the minister's church. It also described the sad state of Christian education existing in many of our churches, a state which gives children and youth a poor impression of the Christian faith, either by failing to teach Christianity at all or by teaching it through inadequate instructors and in an atmosphere of chaos.

Now it must be granted that the Protestant minister in these days is expected to perform a great many duties. A century ago churches had school teachers or ministers of education who handled the educational ministry of the church, and freed the minister for preaching, the conduct of worship, pastoral care and other ecclesiastical functions. While the minister was a teacher and his sermons were usually very carefully worked out and logically presented in pedagogical style, he was not expected to be an expert preacher, liturgist, evangelist, counselor, teacher, community leader and administrator all at the same time. He was a good husband and father to wife and children, no doubt, but he would have been disturbed greatly to read about what the experts today expect of a model husband and father. Let us admit that the Protestant minister today faces an impossible assignment.

It must also be admitted with Mr. Westberg that the old dualism between the Sunday school and the church is still with us. In many churches it is a tradition, deeply engrained and difficult to change. But let us also admit that there is a place in every church for classes in Christianity, for informal fellowship outside the sanctuary, for lay activity in the various tasks of the Church. American Christianity has been largely a lay movement from the beginning. Methodists, Baptists, and free church groups prospered in this land of freedom in contrast to the traditionalism of Europe.

A Lingering Dualism

Many a traditional church has not come to grips with this lay, voluntary, democratic spirit in our church life. Ministers who are jealous of their ministerial dignity and position, and who regard the church as "their" church, and equate the church with the worship service which they conduct, are apt to see in the Sunday school a rival. The problem, it seems to me, is not in setting up one church (Sunday school) over against another (church sanctuary), but rather in thinking through the nature of the church so as to provide for both these expressions of the Christian community with a proper understanding as to the nature and place of each. I have found some ministers actually jealous of the success of the Sunday school! If they had their way about it, they would get rid of the whole business. But, will the church be a real church with no Sunday or other school?

Let us grant, then, that Eccles is right in maintaining that the church needs a teaching minister, and that in most churches which are small, the minister is the teacher. Let us also grant that the Sunday school in many instances does not do a good job of teaching the Christian faith or of introducing our growing generation into its rich heritage. Let us grant, too, that real church unity ought to start in local churches by getting all the organizational agencies integrated into the church, and that corporate worship is really the heart of the Christian community's life. What follows from all this? What is the remedy for an illiterate Protestantism? How shall we build a teaching church?

First of all, we shall have to start with the ministry. Theological seminaries will have to give

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A Noted Professor of Christian Education Tells How the Church Can Improve Its Teaching Ministry

TEACHING CHURCH

a better Christian education to prospective ministers personally. Teaching methods in seminaries may have to be revised to conform to the ways in which seminaries learn! Much of our trouble in churches is due to the fact that whatever seminarians are taught about the techniques of Christian education is negated by the antequated methods theological professors use to teach their subjects. And the young minister carries the methods of his favorite professors over into the churches he serves. I dare say that theological seminaries will have to help students understand *what teaching is!* Lecturing is one form of teaching, but the test of any method is in what the student learns. Seminaries would be of immense help in developing the teaching church if they would become *communities of learners.* This would give the students some concrete idea as to what a teaching Christian community really is.

There is much that might be said here about courses in the practical field and about field work. Both of them bear a heavy responsibility in the developing of minister-teachers.

Start with the Seminaries

Second, I wonder if we do not need to teach ministers a truer conception of the church. What is a church? The theologians have battled over this problem for centuries. I have no desire to settle the debate—if I could! But, so many ministers regard themselves as centers of the church! Even seminaries train them to think of themselves as leaders of the people, who organize and run the institution efficiently and successfully. A growing budget and membership, and an increasing church attendance, are the criteria of church success. The minister is the "chief." But, is this a church? Is not a church a community of people committed to Christ and constantly engaged in worship, charity and community action as a Christian force? The minister is not the boss; he is the chief servant of the church. He must decrease while the church increases. He sows himself sacrificially in the soil of his people. He leads others who worship with him. He teaches the teachers. He trains the whole congregation to be evangelistic.

It is this conception of the church which is uniquely Protestant. Clericalism disguises itself often in the form of inspired leadership; but it is nevertheless dangerous. When a minister is inclined to be jealous, he ought to ask himself: What about the church in this place? Is *that* being built? And if people do not see what the church is, perhaps the minister has failed not only in his teaching but by his unconscious actions, to help people see that *they* are the church. If they go to Sunday school and not to church worship, is that a slight to the minister, or is it an indication of a profound misunderstanding of what a church is and does? I believe that our officialism in Protestantism has been an enemy of the real church.

A Teaching Faith

Third, Protestantism cannot escape the necessity of building up a teaching vocation. Roman Catholicism has its teaching orders for primary, secondary, collegiate and university, seminary and graduate education. Protestantism has had too narrow a conception of the Christian faith. It is interpreted too much in terms merely of individual commitment to Christ. The Christian faith is a *teaching* faith, because it has a history, a literature, a cultus, a system of truth, an ethic, a world program. Christianity is a rich culture to which we must introduce our people and help them to be creative critic-interpreters and advocates. We need a multiple-ministry. We need social workers, clinicians, hospital chaplains, researchers, educators and many other types of vocational experts to make our full ministry complete. This vocation cannot be filled by women alone; their ministries are too short-lived because of marriage and other reasons. Young men must go into this ministry as assistant or associate pastors. And the churches must make a place for this ministry by placing it on a par with that of the regular ministry! The teaching church has not developed largely because the church has no high regard for the teaching nature and function of the church!

Fourth, the teaching church will come into being if every local congregation is led by its minister into seeing that the whole church is engaged in the educational process. Education is not done by only a few people who are designated as teachers. Protestantism believes in the priesthood of believers; this means that every member is a nurturing and educating priest to his neighbor. This is especially true of parents who are to be "priests" to their children. When this conception of the church as a teaching community becomes alive in the minds of people, the home will assume its teaching ministry with systematic help from the leaders of the church.

It seems to me that only in this way will Christian education become a ministry in the church

which possesses dignity and compelling power. And perhaps, higher education in church-related colleges, in student foundations and in theological seminaries will become something integral to the nature of the Christian faith, and not be regarded by the average church member as an extra ministry supported by individuals and not by the church.

Fifth, the teaching church can emerge only if the leaders of the various agencies of the local church come to see the wholeness of the church and their particular and essential roles in its function. Many a lay person has no sense of mission in what he does in the church. The minister, he thinks, is doing the real thing. This is not only erroneous; it is close to heresy!

A Pastoral-Educational Ministry

It may take three years—it may take five years —but in that time it is possible for a minister, working patiently and personally with his leaders and through a pastoral-educational ministry, to help people to see the church which Christ wants built in the community. The unity between Sunday school and the church will not come about by eradicating either in favor of one, but by getting both to be subordinated to a higher unity! Let the Sunday school continue to operate on Sundays. Let it be a church school. The time it meets is not canonical, any more than is 11 A.M. the only acceptable time for worship.

Last of all, I would say that we shall need to understand what Christian education really is. Some people have the simple idea that it is the inculcation of doctrines into the minds of children through memorization. Others think it is the infilling of young minds with Bible facts. Still others regard it as a conditioning process to make loyal church attendants and members. But are these objectives really the objectives of the Gospel which is to be taught by the church?

Christian education, or the educational purpose of the Christian faith, is to teach doctrines so that they may be understood as vital convictions; it is studying the Bible so that God may speak through it to the students; indeed, it is making creative and intelligent members of the Christian community. But that is something quite different from the static conceptions that some people have of teaching the Christian faith. Teaching is a difficult ministry; it is a holy task; it is patient work with persons. To achieve a teaching church will require much prayer and work. There is no other way!

The teaching church can be achieved! Yet it will never be done by a minister who does not understand what teaching is; who does not understand the living and manifold nature of the church and its ministries; who does not seek the help of assistants or associates in the educational vocation to help him make the whole church a teaching community; and who does not help his lay associates understand what a real church is.

The Great Stone Face

A Mother's Day Sermon For Children

By John Schott

Pastor, Fairmount Presbyterian Church
Cleveland Heights, Ohio

ONE of the most fascinating stories Nathaniel Hawthorne ever told was about the Great Stone Face which nature had miraculously carved out of the majestic mountain brooding over a peaceful New England village.

According to a popular legend, it was believed that one of the boys of that area whose countenance bore an exact resemblance to the Great Stone Face would become "the greatest and noblest personage in his time."

Soon it was reported that a native son who had amassed a fabulous fortune was returning, and everyone was sure that his countenance would resemble that of the Great Stone Face. But there proved to be something very sordid, mercenary and mean about him, and the villagers realized that they had made a mistake. Many years later an illustrious soldier returned and the people were all agog. Surely he would resemble the Great Stone Face. But once again they were disappointed, for this warrior's weather-beaten face did not reveal the "gentle wisdom and deep broad tender sympathies" of the stone image. A famous statesman also returned, but he likewise proved disappointing.

The people had almost given up hope when finally they made a discovery. One of the men of the community who had done nothing spectacular except to be gentle and kind to all those who crossed his path, helping the little children as well as the aged, speaking words of cheer to those whose hearts were heavy, and doing everything he could to make the village a finer place in which to live—he, they realized at last, was the greatest and noblest personage of his time; he was the one whose countenance did, indeed, resemble that of the Great Stone Face.

This is Mother's Day, and you can readily see that this story lends itself beautifully to this occasion. There is little likelihood that your mothers will be financial wizards and amass fabulous sums of money. Nor are the chances very great that they will be great warriors like Joan of Arc, leading armies from one victory to another. Nor will they, most probably, be great statesmen, swaying thousands and millions of people by their oratory. But they are, nevertheless, numbered among the greatest and noblest of people because in a quiet and effective manner they go about their humble tasks, with the spirit of Christ in their hearts and a determination to befriend all those who cross their paths.

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In Quest of a Vital Religion

By Robert J. McCracken

I know whom I have believed and I am sure that he is able to guard until that Day what has been entrusted to me.—II Timothy 1:12.

PAUL had a vital religion. He was not a second-hand but a first-hand Christian. His faith was not founded on hearsay but on an experience immediate and personal. Reading his letters you never have the impression that he is mechanically repeating what he has heard somebody else affirming, or that his religion is traditional, conventional, a family inheritance. On the contrary, he leaves you feeling: Here is a man who in the realm of faith has made a discovery, who is thrilled by the wonder of it and living in the glory of it. You note from his use of the first personal pronoun—"I know. . . . I am persuaded. . . . I have committed"—that his religion, wrought into the texture of his life and thought, passed through the fires of his soul, is his own, his very own.

What made Paul's religion vital? His vivid sense of God; his no less vivid sense, begotten in him by Christ of the forgiveness of his sins; a new sense of power, of adequacy for life; a new sense of peace, an inner serenity independent of circumstance; a new infectious gaiety of spirit, a joy also independent of circumstance, not bound up with health or wealth, temperament or disposition; and especially an outgoing love for others, a desire to serve them and to share with them the discovery that had so transformed his life.

If only all religion were like that! So much of it, as you and I well know, is conventional and formal, without vigor or vitality, more a matter of outward observance than of intimate acquaintance, with little in to quicken the pulse or stir the heart or constrain to action. It should be a tremendous, dynamic power, sweeping into human life and changing it utterly, but for so many who reckon themselves religious it is no such thing. It has not entered into them or become a part of them. Instead of being the most distinctive and characteristic thing about them it is a kind of addendum, an incidental and marginal interest, nominal rather than vital. They have no vivid sense of God or of having their sins forgiven by God. The transforming power of religion has never been released into their lives.

The Search for God

It would be a mistake to suppose that they are in every case content that it should be so. Deep down in their hearts the religion for which multitudes hunger is a vital religion. If God is to be known they want to know him. If religion has the secret of the mastery of the art of living they want to be introduced to it. If pardon and power and peace are available, really available, they need them and want to know what to do to get them. How does religion become a matter of first-hand experience? How does one personally appropriate it? How is the passage made from formal observance to intimate acquaintance? What has one to do to secure direct contact with spiritual reality, an original, immediate confrontation with God so that one can say without exaggeration the sort of thing Paul said in our text? I raise the question because in one form or another people have put it to me. I reply to it with four suggestions.

First of all, *consult the experts.* Go to those who have had a vital religious experience and observe what they have to say—how they came by it, how they maintained it, what they conceive it to be. It is what you must do if you want any kind of experience. Musical experience, for example. If you want that you have got to get to know the great masters. You have got to sit at their feet, to live with them, to learn from them, to set yourself to understand what, through their glorious medium, they are saying. It is what you must do if you want scientific experience. Any physicist, chemist, engineer will tell you that there is no shortcut to it. There is no substitute for hard work, for a long apprenticeship of inquiry and application, genius in this field as in any other being an infinite capacity for taking pains. You have got to get down to the study of the textbooks. You have to make yourself familiar with the findings and conclusions of the experts.

With religion it is the same. You don't just

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stumble on a vital religious experience. It is only acquired, and then developed and deepened, by industry, dedication, discipline. It has its textbooks, covering every aspect of religious experience, some of them ancient—*The Confessions of Augustine,* some of them medieval—Thomas á Kempis' *Imitation of Christ,* some of them modern —Thomas Kelly's *Testament of Devotion,* the greatest of them the Bible. If we desire a vital religion we have got to consult the experts. The measure of our desire can be estimated by the extent to which we do consult them. The prophets have a great deal to teach us, and the psalmists, and the saints. Above all, there is Christ. No one has ever known God as intimately or as fully as he. The Gospels give us his teaching. They introduce us to his principles. In their pages we see him at work. We come under the influence of his mind and spirit. The very atmosphere of his presence invades our lives. This is what others have found. This is what we can find. If you want a vital religion consult the experts.

Depth and Stability

The second suggestion I make is: *Don't attach too much importance to your feelings.* It is what we all incline to do. We covet the glow of religious emotion, and if we lose it, or experience it only at rare intervals, we are apt to think that the vigor and vitality have gone from our faith. What has to be remembered is that feeling is only one third of our life. Thought and will are its other constituent elements, and God is apprehended by thought and will as well as in feeling. Religious emotion should not be sought as an end in itself. Because the soul has its moods, feeling is certain to vary from day to day. There is such a thing as rhythm in the spiritual life, the swing of the pendulum from free, glad communion to seeming dereliction. The glow departs; despondency and depression supervene. Jesus himself passed from the Mount of Transfiguration to the Garden of Gethsemane—yes, and to a Golgotha where he could only say, "My God, my God, why hast Thou forsaken me?" Just as in nature, night succeeds day and winter alternates with summer, so also in the religious life radiance and gloom, elation and despair are not very far from one another.

It is a mistake to identify vital religion exclusively with emotional fervor or to suppose that it must always be accompanied by ardor and passion. Not intensity but depth and stability are the signs of authentic religious experience, and they come through the patient, persistent exercise of the mind and the will. In vital religion it is the whole man, the entire personality that is engaged. Moreover it is a law of the mind that as the years increase feelings become less intense, but in spiritually educated minds they become refined, because thought and will temper and mature them. Emotions stale, convictions ripen. William Law, author of the great Christian classic, *A Serious Call to the Devout Life,* when he rose from bed at five in the morning, was accustomed to pray: "When I awake I am still with Thee." That was the first doctrinal affirmation with which he confronted his half awake and half reluctant soul. Notice that he did not say, "When I awake I *feel* that I am still with Thee." The chances are that he did not. One is not very rich in feeling at five o'clock in the morning. William Law said a deeper thing to himself. He said, "When I awake I *am* still with Thee." Think about that. In religion don't attach too much importance to your feelings.

The third suggestion I make is: *Give God a chance.* After all, if you spend about sixteen hours of your working day in thinking about this world, and a perfunctory five minutes, if even that, in trying to remember your Maker and your immortal soul, this world will naturally seem to you about two hundred times more real than the other. This must be so, however real the spiritual world may be. If you never think of it, or only very occasionally think of it, it will be unreal to you. I want to emphasize that. It is impossible to be worldly-minded six days in the week and spiritually-minded for an hour on Sunday. It is impossible that on our feet we should be selfish, superficial, cynical, and then suddenly become different persons on our knees. John Milton found that if he was to write poetry well he had himself to become a true poem. Similarly, if we want to have a vital religion we must make a real place for it in our lives.

I don't know how often people have told me that they don't pray because God is not real to them. The truth of the matter is that God is not real to them because they don't pray. To the person who never prays God cannot make himself real. To the soul which will never subdue its noisy clamor to silence, to listen for the divine voice which guides and blesses and reassures, there is little hope that a convincing religious experience will ever come. But to the person who prays habitually, not only when he feels like it but whether he feels like it or not, his will going into action when his emotions flag, God is sure to make himself real, sure to become the biggest fact in life, filling the whole horizon. If there is one thing the experts are unanimous about it is that.

Paying the Price

Brother Lawrence spent ten long years teaching himself to pray, ten years of quiet, resolute, unceasing effort. The chief reason why people give up the quest for a vital religion is the great number of difficulties attending the quest, difficulties that are just as much practical as they are theoretical. And back of the practical difficulty lies something deeper. Al Ghazzali, the Moslem mystic, has a sentence that cuts like a knife. "If you are never alone with God, it is not because you are too busy; it is because you don't care for him, don't like him. And you had better face the facts." Let us be honest with ourselves about this. Do we really want a vital religion? Are we prepared to pay the price for it?

The fourth and final suggestion I offer is this. If you want a vital religion, and you haven't got it, *try to find out what is holding you up,* what the

block or barrier is which is coming between you and God. The one thing about which you should not entertain any doubt is that God is seeking you with a passion and a constancy which put to shame any search you may be making for him. We often talk about seeking God as if he were an elusive person, always just beyond our grasp. How much nearer to the truth Francis Thompson was when he daringly described God as the Hound of Heaven, tirelessly on our track, never giving us up, his love refusing to let us go. What we ought to seek are the things which come between us and God. It isn't always a simple matter to put a finger on them. They slip so easily into the unconscious. We are all such born rationalizers.

I once heard Dr. Hutton tell about a young man in his congregation who was forever complaining about his intellectual difficulties in the matter of religion. If it was not the inspiration of the Bible it was the miracles, if it was not the miracles it was the divinity of Christ, if it was not the divinity of Christ it was the inconsistent lives of Christians. For a while Dr. Hutton listened patiently and sympathetically and did all he could to help, but the impression began to grow on him that the difficulties had another source. One day when a fresh intellectual problem was described Hutton looked the young man straight in the eye and said, "Tell me, have you by any chance any difficulties with the Ten Commandments?" It was a frontal attack and it proved effective. It turned out that in that particular case the crux of the difficulty was not intellectual at all; it was moral.

Consult the Experts

Don't misunderstand me. I am not saying that *all* religious difficulties have a moral rather than an intellectual source. I am saying that they sometimes have. They are based on character. They strike their roots into some secret sin. It may be an evil habit which we will not surrender. It may be an illicit relationship which we will not break. It may be an attitude so selfiish, so cantankerous, so censorious that it is poisoning all the springs of our spiritual life. I am perhaps talking to somebody now who can put his finger on the thing which he has never surrendered, on the place where he is saying "No" to God. Friend, don't talk about looking for God until you have got that right. Don't rationalize. Be realistic. Be logical. Be reasonable. Don't try to justify what you are doing because to face the facts would be distasteful and a mortal blow to your self esteem. Ask God to show you the true nature of your sin, how it binds you, how it blinds you, how it comes between you and him and keeps you from the most powerful transforming influence in the world. When it is recognized, confessed, surrendered, the barrier between God and your soul will have gone.

Let no one say that he cannot attain a vital religion. All of us can if we will. We can have a vivid sense of God and of the forgiveness of sins, a new sense of power and peace, a new infectious gaiety of spirit, an outgoing love for others. I point the way to a first-hand, vital religion. Consult the experts. Don't attach too much importance to your feelings. Find out what is holding you up and break with it. Give God a chance.

Late one afternoon Charles Kingsley walked by the seaside. That evening he made an entry in his diary. "My spiritual birthright! Before the sleeping earth and the sleepless sea and stars I have devoted myself to God, a vow never, if he gives me the faith I pray for, to be recalled." That day Kingsley sought and found a vital religion.

A Litany for Pentecost

May 24, 1953

O GOD, the Father of glory, who didst give Jesus Christ thy Son to be the chief cornerstone of the Church;

HAVE MERCY UPON US.

O Christ, Head of thy Body the Church, which thou didst purchase with thy blood;

HAVE MERCY UPON US.

O Spirit of holiness and truth, the sanctifier and guide of the Church;

HAVE MERCY UPON US.

For the innumerable company out of every nation and race and tongue who now make up the Church of Christ

THANKS BE TO THEE, O GOD.

For our unity in Christ, which, in spite of many differences, draws us together in one community of faith and love and service

THANKS BE TO THEE, O GOD.

For the many evidences that the Holy Spirit is bringing about a deeper Christian fellowship and an increasing cooperation among Christians

THANKS BE TO THEE, O GOD.

O eternal God, who didst send thy Holy Spirit upon thy Church on the day of Pentecost, and hast promised that this Spirit shall abide with us for ever; let this same Spirit lead us into all truth, defend us from all sin, enrich us with thy gifts, refresh us with thy comfort, rule our hearts in all things, and lead us in the way everlasting; through Jesus Christ our Lord, who with thee and the same Spirit liveth and reigneth one God, world without end.

AMEN.

—Adapted from the National Council Assembly worship program, Denver, Colorado, 1952.

Our Homes and Tomorrow

By Arthur Kolsti, Jr.

THE first chapter of I Samuel is more than a story; it is a relevant tract for our own times. During the past century family life has undergone a marked change. We no longer live in simple farming communities or towns made up of independent merchants and craftsmen. We now belong to a giant industrial machine which has both complicated and weakened family life.

In the story of Samuel's birth we find underlined the importance of the home. Let us examine the scene. We begin, not with the actual story itself, but with the conditions back of the scene. Samuel's birth took place in the eleventh century before Christ. This was a difficult period in the history of Israel. There was no national organization. The small tribes that had settled the land of Canaan were hard pressed by unfriendly neighbors. Israel was struggling to hold her gains. It was a dark and stormy time with fears within and fighting without. The absence of prophecy made the picture even gloomier, for it was an age of materialism. No inspired leader like Moses stood ready to give vision and purpose to Hebrew life. The nation had lost its poetry and faith. The picture of tired old Eli and his two unscrupulous sons is symbolic of the emptiness of Hebrew life at this time. Israel was enduring a time of trouble.

A time of trouble—this is the phrase Arnold Toynbee used to describe the first half of our century. He feels that we are caught in a cycle of wars which we cannot break. He believes that we stand at the eleventh hour, a time when we must be reborn or die. Like eleventh century Israel, we stand in a trying period. Israel had either to go forward or be forever engulfed by her enemies. So, we have reached the point of advance or retreat.

Look more closely at our story, however. We note that in the midst of moral decay there stands a religious home. The scene presented by the home of Hannah and Elkanah is one of domestic simplicity and humble piety. True, we read of polygamy; but judge this family in the light of their time. Remember these people did not live under the light of later prophetic and Christian revelation. Viewed in terms of the eleventh century before Christ, the story of Samuel's parents gives us the picture of a devout home.

A devout home standing in the midst of trouble. How important this proved to Israel! As a nation Israel may have been spiritually anemic, but within the walls of this home the fires of religion were kept burning. How important the presence of devout homes in our society can be! Collectively we may be groping, but as long as the fires of faith are kept burning in the family circle, there are real signs of hope. The danger comes when our *homes* enter into times of trouble. What goes on within the walls of these homes today determines the kind of leaders that will emerge from them tomorrow.

A Devout Home

One wonders how many devout homes there are in our society today. In her book, *More Than We Are,* Marguerite Bro tells about the little boy who went to visit his grandmother during the Lenten season. Since no baby sitters were available on prayer meeting night, the lad went along with the adults to prayer meeting. It seemed to him that he was engaged in big business for the Kingdom as he heard the prayers. When his mother came at Easter, she was delighted to see him looking so well. She had worried, she said, because his letters had told of "going to all those parties." When the puzzled grandmother insisted he hadn't been to any parties, the little boy explained he had written that he was going to parties, because Mother "wouldn't know what a prayer meeting was."

How typical of many modern families. Gone is the family altar, the quiet gathering in the evening, grace at mealtime and family prayers. Could it be that prosperity has numbed our moral edge? The papers during the summer carry this warning to vacationists: "Uninterrupted sunshine sets the stage for forest fires—it's time for extra caution." So unlimited prosperity sets the stage for moral poverty.

One is reminded of another little boy invited to the minister's home for lunch. Before eating, the

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pastor's wife said, "Tommy, we are going to pray now. Do you pray before meals in your house?" "No," replied Tommy, "we don't have to; my mother's a good cook." Why pray when things are going smoothly?

Friends, there are real rewards awaiting us in the realm of family worship. God has set us in families for a definite purpose. We nourish one another in many ways. Family worship establishes togetherness, trust, respect and closer communion with one another. These are qualities essential to the development of Christian personalities. Paul, writing to Philemon, sends greetings to "our beloved fellow worker and Apphia our sister and Archippus our fellow soldier, and the church *in your house.*" What about the *church* in your *house?* A devout family is a bright spot in a time of trouble.

Concerned Parents

Return again to our story. We note more than a devout family. We see a concerned parent. Hannah is not only devout herself, but she is also keenly interested in the spiritual life of her son. Perhaps the two most touching verses in the Old Testament are the ones describing Hannah's prayer. "Hannah was speaking in her heart; only her lips moved, and her voice was not heard." No formal prayer here, but the unveiling of a parent's heart before God. Eli is shocked at the sight of such rare devotion. Later Hannah presented her son to the temple service to insure his spiritual growth.

A concerned parent—here is another bright spot in this time of trouble. How we need such parents today. Parents concerned not so much about tonsils, adenoids, dancing lessons and school work—important as these things may be—but about the deep things of the spirit.

In his book, *A Greater Generation,* Ernest Ligon asks readers to imagine that Abraham Lincoln, George Washington, Martin Luther, William Harvey, Oliver Cromwell, Nicholas Copernicus, Andrew Jackson and Michael Faraday were all students in their local high school in one year. In the average school of an average community, he believes, it is quite probable there are students who match or exceed these famous men in I.Q. Why then do we not produce more great leaders? The alarming conclusion points to a missing ingredient. I.Q. is not enough! The missing factor is moral character. We can produce individuals with keen minds and sound bodies, but it avails us little if they do not have real religion as a motivating force in life and conduct.

Moral Rearmament

Christian growth begins and ends in the home. Children receive their Christian attitudes in so many silent ways through the attitudes, actions and words of parents. The wise parent will look to his own religious life. He will give time to his children for play and conversation. He will learn to talk naturally about God, Jesus and the Bible. He will pray with his children. He will seek the help of good books. Concerned parents can end the crisis in religious education. Moral rearmament begins in the home.

A time of trouble, a devout home, a concerned parent—this combination gave Israel a leader. Under Samuel, Israel forged ahead. Religion was revitalized, idolatry rooted out, the Philistines contained and a kingdom founded. Israel was saved in her eleventh hour because, in a time of trouble, a concerned parent in a devout home produced a leader. Hannah's child, Samuel, became the channel of God's purpose for Israel.

This is why our homes will determine our tomorrow. From these homes will emerge our future citizens and leaders. The Christian home is our medium for social salvation. With devout homes and concerned parents, the future can be bright with hope. Grace Noll Crowell puts it this way:

So long as there are homes to which men turn at close of day;
So long as there are homes where children are,
Where women stay—
If love and loyalty and faith be found
Across those sills—
A stricken nation can recover from
Its gravest ills.

So long as there are homes where fires burn
And where there is bread;
So long as there are homes where lamps are lit
And prayer are said;
Although people falter through the dark—
And nations grope—
With God Himself back of these little homes—
We have sure hope.*

A Pastoral Prayer

By Horace H. Goodell

Pastor, Fifth Avenue Congregational Church
Minneapolis, Minnesota

O GOD, Eternal and All-knowing, we feel a kinship with thee because thou art ever working and creating. Open to us the sluice gates of thy heavenly love which flows out to all kinds and conditions of men who open their hearts to thee. May we rejoice, as our Lord Christ rejoiced, to carry good news to the needy, to bring release to the captives, to open the eyes of the blind, to bring deliverance to those who are oppressed and to prepare the way through the wilderness for those who shall come after us.

We thank thee for the triumph of the Holy Spirit in the hearts of many in these days, and we ask that we may be quick to obey when we feel and hear thy call to generous action and to self-giving love. Forgive us all for our willful blindness in the past and enable us from this day forward to serve thee with an unfaltering loyalty.

Strengthen all those who labor for peace and justice between the warring groups in our own land and throughout the world. May we measurably hasten thy Kingdom's coming in our own day. Amen.

*From *Light of the Years,* by Grace Noll Crowell. Copyright 1936 by Harper & Brothers. Used by permission.

Small Towns and Great Men

By Clifton R. Bohanan

"A prophet is not without honor, except in his own country, and among his own kin, and in his own house."—Mark 6:4.

THE greatness of Jesus is magnified many times for me by the fact that he was raised in a small town. Strange as it may seem, a small town is not conducive to greatness, but exerts pressure and offers motives for mediocrity. To grow up in a small town, a person must carefully observe closely defined mores of thinking, speaking, behaving. He must not rise too far above the means of success, nor fall too far below accepted levels of morality.

A big city, on the other hand, is more tolerant of human failure, allowing dissipation, crime and general wickedness to go on uncensored so long as it stays in its own back alleys. At the same time it is willing to acclaim surpassing excellence without rancor or distrust.

Many with superficial and romantic knowledge of small-town life will suggest that one of the reasons Jesus was great was that he grew up in Nazareth. However, those with more intimate knowledge of small communities, and for that matter of the Gospel record itself, believe that Jesus achieved unexcelled greatness of mind and spirit in spite of, rather than because of, his small-town background. The incident described in the sixth chapter of Mark's Gospel indicates the typical hostility and distrust of a small community toward one of its own who succeeds in breaking out of its own established mold of mediocrity. The people simply couldn't see one of their boys being any better than they were. Imagine, a son of their own carpenter standing up there preaching to them as though he were the Son of God!

Instead of being bitter about their small-mindedness in this instance, Jesus made the philosophical comment of our text. Is this not evidence in itself of his greatness? Surely it takes a big man to live in a small town and yet grow bigger.

Of course this in no way disparages the values of rural living. I myself was born and raised in a small town—a New England small town at that. Not for a moment would I want to raise and educate my own children in a different kind of community. To me the small town community remains man's last retreat from a world blinded by bigness, and man's last hope for a world drunk with power. But we must not blink at the dangers of the small town. And perhaps chief among them is the inability to accept real greatness when it grows up in our midst.

Small-Town Dangers

In Nazareth, a community of a few hundred souls, there lived for some thirty years the One destined to become the Lord and Savior of all men, but his neighbors didn't know it. Why? Perhaps, for one thing, it was their *preoccupation with facts and figures.* As people in small towns will, they judged life by adding and subtracting costs and proceeds, weighing and measuring them by approved standards, noting color and texture, matching them against square and line. According to these criteria, Jesus was little different from the rest of them. He had two eyes, two ears, two arms. He was tall and strong, but so were many of their young men. He had a way with children, but so had others. He had skill with his hands and could turn out a right good table or yoke, but surely this gave him no right to preach to them as though he were God. When the people of Nazareth added up and subtracted facts, figures, profit and loss, they concluded that Jesus was no better than their own sons. Hence if he claimed to be more he must be an imposter.

How often do we make the same mistake about true greatness, judging people, organizations and ideas wholly in terms of fact and figure, profit and loss, weight and measure, never getting down to the roots of life because we are too busy with the perishable fruits?

Another frequent cause for small-town blindness to true greatness in its native sons is the *film of familiarity.* "Is this not the carpenter, the son of Mary, the brother of James and Joses and Judas

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and Simon? Are not his sisters with us?" the people of Nazareth asked. He had lived with them for thirty years. They were so familiar with his ways that they did not recognize anything beyond the ordinary in him.

This, too, is typical of the small community. Whereas the city looks for the unusual to exploit for publicity the town seeks to play it down. This is the mood that prevails in spite of momentary flurries of excitement when home-town military heroes are to be welcomed or a choice bit of neighhood gossip sets the town on its ear. However much it acclaims its heroes one day, it wants them back on the same old terms the next. And however much it clucks its tongue over the latest vagrancies of its citizens, no one wants the story in the papers, and in an amazingly short time these have been swept under the rug with the rest of the forgotten scandals.

Film of Familiarity

The familiar and the ordinary is the prevailing norm by which all truth is judged. If things are as they always have been, all is right and good with the world; but if something gets out of line with the familiar, it must soon be put in its place or rooted out. So we never come to face frankly and fully the nature of our faults. If we have had them a long time we cannot see that they are faults at all. This is the way it has been since we can remember; why change it now? If they were genuinely frank, most small-town chambers of commerce would put a sign outside their villages: "Please do not disturb."

For the same reason we never come to appreciate the goodness that is here. As we do not want to be confronted with our sins, so we do not want to be challenged by our excellence. Whether or not familiarity breeds contempt, it certainly breeds content.

Let one of our youth, for example, try to break out of the shell of mediocrity we have built around vocations. We would be happy for him to be moderately successful in business, education, music, or engineering skills, for we have grown familiar with that idea. Young people from our community have been doing that for many years. But what if one of our young people should suggest going into the ministry or Christian missions? Surely there would be those who would throw cold water on that idea in a hurry. None of our young people have gone into these fields in recent years, so the thought of entering these vocations is unfamiliar to us.

Or what would happen if one of our young men should declare himself a conscientious objector to military service? An outrage! Why? Well, it just isn't done.

One more possible cause for the small-town blindness of Nazareth may have been the *astigmatism of class*. The idea of a carpenter becoming a rabbi should not have shocked them if they had remembered their history, for some of their greatest prophets had come from farm and field. But contemporary fashion decreed that religious leadership must come from higher social levels than the carpenter shop.

So far as religious leadership in our own nation is concerned we seem to have largely overcome the barriers of class. Though the son of an upper middle-class family is in better position to secure an education, people from all walks of life may find room in the ranks of American church leadership, none-the-less.

But can we say in all frankness that we judge personal worth always without respect to social background? Is the political wisdom of the farm laborer accepted as readily as that of the large land owner? Are we as quick to acclaim spiritual greatness when it appears in the family life of log-cabin folks as we are to honor it in the large house on Main street? How much harder must a displaced person or Negro work to prove his worth than the son of our own native stock? A neighboring town has accepted a Negro teacher in its high school, though so far as I know there are no Negro children in the school at all. Supposing such a teacher should apply for a similar responsibility in our town. Would we be able to judge her worth wholly on her educational and personal fitness for the position?

The New Testament speaks of the return of Christ to the earth. Surely he does return often in the creative thinking, redemptive action and sacrificial living of people in our own little village. Pity us then if, because of small-town preoccupation with facts and figures, in our constant obsession with the familiar, and in our continuing adoration for social position, we follow after small-town Nazareth and turn him away.

TITLES AND TEXTS

What Pulpit Readers are Preaching About

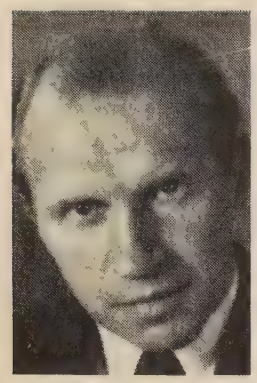
J. EDGAR MCDONALD, Christian, Liberty, Mo. "Going Places" (Commencement Sermon). II Peter 1:3-11.

JOHN ARTHUR SAMUELSON, First Parish, Brunswick, Me. "Parade, Play or Pilgrimage." Matt. 21:10—*And when he entered Jerusalem, all the city was stirred.*

TOM A. WHITING, Methodist, Ocilla, Ga. "Drifting." Hebrews 2:1—*Therefore we must pay the closer attention to what we have heard, lest we drift away from it.*

CHARLIE W. SHEDD, First Presbyterian, Ponca City, Okla. "Do You Suffer the Jehovah Complex?" I Kings 19:14—*And I, even I only, am left; and they seek my life, to take it away.*

E. CARROLL CONDICT, Burma Baptist Mission, Thayetmyo, Burma. "The Great Neglected Fundamental." John 13:34—*A new commandment I give to you, that you love one another; even as I have loved you.*



The Cost of Discipleship

By Helmut Gollwitzer

Luke 9:57-62.

JESUS has many companions along the way. We are among them here this morning. Countless pilgrims have thus traveled with him part of that road along which Jesus has walked through the centuries and which has led him from the country lanes of Palestine into this land, to this very church. To be with him on the road, to be stirred by his words—how worthwhile in itself this is! There are so many lost hours in our lives, but we can be content that this hour, at least, is not one of them.

However, we will accomplish nothing merely by being with Jesus for a while along the road and hearing him. Moreover, one cannot listen to Jesus and get away unscathed. In fact, something is risked when a man joins the company of Jesus, and that risk is explained to us in our text from St. Luke's Gospel.

Here we have the story of two men whose association with Jesus brought them to an event which pierced their lives like the deep thrust of a knife, when each of them suddenly received from Jesus an unexpected command. To the first man this event was even more far-reaching, as he became aware of an irresistible desire arising within him. He came—who knows how or why. Perhaps it was simply a vague interest in the famous Man. Or perhaps he wished to give the impression that he was pious. Similarly, why are we here? Whether out of sincere or insincere motives, who knows?

But that is not the important thing. The important thing is that something is to happen to us, something that will be, perhaps, just as unexpected, unthought of, as it was to the man in our story. For the event is of far deeper significance than we could possibly have imagined. In this man, who might well have intended to return to his former way of life after simply listening awhile to Jesus, there suddenly springs a new desire. And this desire, which is to change his whole life, amazes him. He knows that he must *do* something, and his new desire expresses itself in a wish to be one with the Man, Jesus, to sign over his life, and to walk wholly in Christ's service. "I will follow you wherever you go," he says.

Following Christ

To *follow* Christ—how much more that means than to be just an occasional member of his company, listening to his words! How much more it is than just being registered as a member of his society (as most of us are), members of the company of Jesus, members of the Church. But to *follow* Jesus involves something which is irrevocable, a release from the former life whither we can never again return. It means also an indissoluble tie with Jesus. That this might become our driving desire is the risk we take, unknowing and unthinking, when we join the company of Jesus.

When we receive the vast breadth of Jesus' words, a great power grasps us—a power which seeks to effect something revolutionary within us. That something is a welling-up of the desire to walk completely and forever in his service. This is what is involved in all our church services and our confirmation classes. Therefore these services and classes are by no means free from danger. From the young St. Francis of Assisi to the young Luther and down to many of our theological students of today, young men have found in the word of Jesus this irresistible longing, a longing strong enough to alarm the world about them. Wringing its hands, the world implores, "You shouldn't take these things so seriously. A man must not hazard so much on this kind of thing!"

Is this hazard, this risk, quite clear to you parents when you send your children to classes of religious education and other young people's activities in the church? Do you presume to send them thither so that they may acquire a morsel of Christianity and so, be in good company? Or do you honestly realize into Whose company they go, and are you really aware that they enter the company of Jesus, which means that they enter into a *dangerous* company? It is dangerous because they may desire to be completely in his service and to regard his cause as more important than

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any other thing. Is that what you really want, or would you not be alarmed if such a result were to happen?

Is it quite clear to the state, when it tolerates the Christian Church as a beneficial institution, that the Church's activity has one goal, and that goal is to place men under a Lord who restricts every other authority and who very often commands that which does not please the state? And is that goal clear to the Church herself? Does she understand that she does not exist simply to render a heavenly glow to our earthly existence or to distribute consolation and to help us in difficult times? The Church's aim is to awaken in men the *irresistible desire to become disciples* and, accepting all the consequences, to walk in the service of this Lord.

I have known pastors and elders who have become perplexed upon learning that a particular man was risking his very existence or withdrawing from a promising career, in order to follow the path of confession, suffering and sacrifice for the sake of Jesus and his cause. Indeed, people often appear to give no consideration at all to what it means to follow Christ. They seem to have no idea that this desire, this preparedness for all consequences, this longing to break with their former life and become a disciple, could possibly arise. It is as though they are secretly happy that such a thing does not happen too often. But whatever people might think, the reason for the Church's existence can be thus stated: Men are to be invited to accompany Jesus on his way and to hearken unto him so that this longing to become completely his, to become disciples, may take possession of them.

Becoming Disciples

What is the nature of this service to Jesus? To the second man in our text Jesus said, "Go and proclaim the Kingdom of God!" Thus, to follow Christ does not only mean to take him as an example and emulate him; it means that we are to ally ourselves as fellow workers in his cause. And his cause is the proclamation of the Kingdom of God. So, we must be more to Jesus than *companions* along the road; we must be His *disciples,* for to follow Christ is to proclaim the Kingdom of God through discipleship—in short, both to belong to Christ and to own him.

But what is the meaning of these words so often carelessly tossed about—"the Kingdom of God," "Proclamation"? A preacher is not a magician, and I wonder if the few words of a sermon can make apparent to you something of the vital reality which lies behind these familiar words. This reality became clear to me and these words seemed astonishingly new when, as a prisoner of the Russians, I used to bury the dead of my camp.

On one occasion, in winter, after I had laid a naked skeleton in the frozen earth and covered it over with fir branches, my comrades stood gazing desolately into the grave with this question in their hearts: "How much longer before the fir twigs will cover *our* dead bodies?" I climbed out of the grave to speak to them, and I tried to recall a few words from the Bible about death. But all such words had vanished with the wind, and only this one passage burned itself into my mind. It seemed so unsuitable, but I cried it out: "Leave the dead to bury their own dead; but as for you, go and proclaim the Kingdom of God!" It came like a bolt from the heavens lighting a dreary landscape. I tried to explain it to my comrades who only looked at me, astonished by the joy which burst from my lips. With this command something more than a few words came to me, a new reality broke in upon me. "Proclaim now who is the Lord of this frozen world of death! Make clear the truth. Be a witness to the dominion of the living God and to the life eternal which is always present against death, against cold, against grief and despair! Jesus Christ, the resurrected crucified one, is the present and mighty life of God on earth. It is his life which has dominion over us; not death, as we think in our blindness; not sin, not the foolishness and wickedness of men. This life is choosing you now to be a witness!"

Proclaim the Kingdom!

And so, proclaiming the Kingdom of God does not mean the proclaiming of a dogma, nor the advocation of an idea, nor the propagation of a truth. It means that you become a *witness,* and to be a witness means to be an instrument. Through you as an instrument the Lord of life enters the here and now; he speaks; he preaches for and penetrates the burdened, anxious and closed hearts of men. For this reason, working with Christ and proclaiming the Kingdom cannot be done by words alone, but by our whole way of life.

When we are released from our former servitude and become subject to this One, then we are part of the very text of God's great "Proclamation" of life over death. Sometimes this release is expressed by a man's desertion of his occupation in a desire to become a pastor or a missionary. However, this release can be just as real within the old occupation and the old relationships, for in every case a man's whole life, whatever it may be, is made subject to God. Our decisions, words and deeds among our family, in the world of politics, in our own neighborhood, become a profession against death's claim to dominion, and a confession to the dominion of the divine life.

Thus three critical questions come to our attention in this stern text from St. Luke's Gospel. First, whom do we confess and proclaim in our words and life as our lord—the one upon whom we depend, whom we love or, at the very least, fear above all others? Whose dominion, as far as others can see, will be established and realized by our manner of living? Is it the rule of death, is it sin in its granite-like hardness, an over-concern for money, the might of political power? Or do we proclaim the sovereignty of the divine life in Jesus Christ, the joy of victory, the power of his presence?

Second, has our acquaintance with Jesus, our hours with him, our listening to him on the road, yet awakened in us that strong desire to be living witnesses to this new, divine and lordly rule? Do we realize that unless we are walking in his glorious service, we are serving death and oblivion and squandering our life, crumbling it away to nothingness? In all our listening to the gospel has there yet come to us an inkling of what a wonderful, indestructible meaning comes into our small, transient lives when we let ourselves be drawn into his service? Bear your witness to this great calling.

Third, *if* we have an idea of the meaning of service and *if* we desire to become disciples, we must understand that we are not entering upon a broad, comfortable and lucrative way, but upon a hard, narrow way, full of stern demands, painful privations and grave conflicts. Let us know that our earthly life will not become easier, that we will not be among those considered to be "doing well" in life, who always have a protective roof over their heads, but just the opposite! On earth, disciples are without shelter; they are at the mercy of the storms; men shrink from them. They are surrounded by rejection, folly and slander; they are often alone and abandoned. Disciples are followers of that One to whom mankind could give only a wooden beam for a cross. Jesus said warningly: "Foxes have holes, and birds of the air have nests; but the Son of man has nowhere to lay his head."

Jesus does not deceive us; he does not acquire fellow workers by sham promises. He tells us plainly of that which we must be prepared to accept if we want to give ourselves to his cause, and are not content simply to listen to him for a little while. It is almost as though he wanted to frighten us away from discipleship. But whoever hears his stern words aright knows that they do not frighten but invite. Indeed, these words are Jesus' invitation to us to be bound by him in the manner expressed by the term *discipleship.*

We have already said that discipleship means our working together with Jesus. Thus, striving with him can only be possible insofar as we are willing to *follow* him, allowing him to go on ahead. This we can do when we let him prepare and show us the way, day by day.

We do not come to him and say, "Here, Lord, thou hast us for fellow workers. Be glad that such excellent people as we are walking in thy service." No, we say, "We want our lives to receive this high and rich meaning, we want to spend ourselves in thy service. But we know that our working with thee, O Christ, is only possible when thou workest for us, when thou goest before us, step by step, when thou hast grace to make us—poor, impotent, and weak as we are—witnesses and instruments of thy life."

A Post-Easter Sermon Which Will Lift The Heart of Every Reader

'He Showed Them His Hands'

By Murdoch MacKinnon

John 20:20.

IF the words of our text are not taken from an account of the first ordination in the New Testament, at least they are found in the story of the first service of consecration and commissioning.

The hand is a very important member of the human body, so much so that we sometimes identify it with the whole man. We say for example, "There are 300 hands employed in this particular industry," forgetting that annexed to those hands are heads and hearts and homes and families. You recognize the artist by his long, sensitive fingers, and the artisan by his calloused palms. "Two men I honor and no third," said Thomas Carlyle. "First the toilworn craftsman that with earth-made implements laboriously conquers the earth and makes her man's. Venerable to me is the hard hand. . . . A second man I honor and still more highly: him who is seen toiling for the spiritually indispensable, not daily bread but the bread of life. . . . Unspeakably touching is it, however, when I find both dignities united. Sublimer in this world I know nothing than a peasant saint. Such an one will take thee back to Nazareth itself."

Let us, then, go back to Nazareth itself today and see the peasant saint as he labors for his daily bread, making ploughs and yokes and doors. These were the same hands that lifted little children and were raised in benediction over the multitudes.

He came to his friends, for he knew they needed him. They were assembled through fear, but he said, "Peace be unto you." There was no aureole about his head; no royal robes adorned his person; no archangels with trumpet tones announced his entrance. He simply showed his hands. That was enough. They might recognize him by his word of approach, but when they saw his hands, all doubts vanished. The nail prints told their own story.

Symbol of Victory

But why remind them of his failure and rejection? The cross had shattered their faith and blasted their hopes, and now the tragedy of it was being brought home to them again! Professor Sturt of Oxford contended years ago that the Christian Church had perpetuated the memory of defeat and failure long enough—altogether too long—by choosing an instrument of cruelty as a symbol of her faith. With all due respect to Professor Sturt, it must be countered that the Church has not perpetuated the memory of defeat and failure. He showed them his hands, not to remind them of the instruments of torture, but to bring home to them once and for all that it was by way of the cross that victory had been achieved, the power of sin destroyed, and life and immortality brought to light. By way of death, the vital principles of his personality had been released and were now made available for every man. An eternal principle of sacrifice had been at work transmuting an instrument of cruelty into a symbol of all that is highest and holiest in life. It was enshrined in him; it has its origin and fountainhead in the very heart and being of God himself.

Two students out walking one afternoon were discussing questions of religion, as is the custom of many students. One was American, the other Hindu. "I wish Christianity might be adopted as the religion of the whole of India!" the Hindu declared. "But you don't believe in the Christian religion. Why should you want it adopted as the religion of the whole of India?" queried the other. "Because it is the cheapest," was the significant reply. But is it the cheapest? Is Christianity an inexpensive religion? How did this student from India come to think that it was? What gave him this impression? No religion with a cross at its heart is a cheap religion. It cost Jesus his life, and God his son.

To the credit of our humanity let it be remembered that there is a hero in the soul which responds to the challenge of the cross. Jesus believed in men and was confident that some day they would respond to his upward call. On the eve of his betrayal, he was able to say, "And I, when I am lifted up from the earth, will draw all men unto myself."

No, Christianity is not a cheap religion. When Albrecht Dürer was a poor, struggling artist, a friend of his, who also aspired to be an artist, agreed to earn their living by manual labor while Dürer studied and painted. Later he was to have his turn as an artist. But when success came to Dürer, his friend's hands had become so twisted and stiff that he could no longer paint. One day, seeing his friend's work-worn hands in prayer, Dürer thought: "I can never give back the lost skill of those hands, but I can show my feeling of love and gratitude by painting them as they are now, folded in prayer, to show my appreciation of a noble and unselfish character." Thus Dürer's famous painting, "The Folded Hands," was created to enrich the artistic and religious world.

A Letter

During the war I had a letter from my daughter from London, and I made an extract from it that has a bearing on our theme.

Last night I heard a story told by F/O John Robertson, R.A.A.F. He was terribly burned in an airplane crash a year ago, and is still grounded and undergoing treatment. He spent last Sunday in the country at an R.A.F. home, where his doctor works, and, returning late, took a taxi home. When he got out, the driver demanded four shillings, although John knew it could not be more than two and sixpence. He asked the man to switch the light on the meter, but he refused, growling, "I said four shillings. We've got to make a living." But John insisted and, sure enough, the meter said two and threepence so he gave him three shillings, and then remarked that it was a "wrong thing to go charging people exorbitant sums, taking advantage of the blackout."

The driver continued to grouse at the high cost of living and made the worn-out and maddening remark: "There's a war on." John got good and angry. "I am sick of hearing people complaining who haven't had anything to put up with," he said. "Think of fellows in the desert, driving trucks for two and sixpence." "Well," snarled the cab driver, "when it comes to that, what's a young fellow like yourself doing larking about in taxis?" "So," and I'm quoting John's own words, "I turned on the torch and showed him my hands." Now this is something unusual, because he generally *hides them.* He sits with his arms folded or hands in pockets and wears gloves when he can. The reason? He tried to put out the fires at his navigator's station in the plane *with his bare hands.* They are pitifully distorted, fiery red, with grafted skin and tendons miraculously healed or rebuilt by the skill of McIndoo, the plastic surgeon who has done about six operations on them. John has difficulty doing the simplest things like buttoning his coat or lighting his pipe. He never talks much about his suffering; therefore it was all the more remarkable that he should unfold the history of those scarred hands to the taximan.

I wish you could have heard him repeating the conversation in his musical Australian drawl. I just thought at the time, it was a modern instance like Christ's having to show the wounds in his hands to the disbelievers—the people who didn't believe in this struggle we're waging.

MURDOCH MacKINNON preached this sermon during the ordination service at the meeting of the Alberta Conference of the United Church of Canada, which was also the occasion of the 50th anniversary of his own ordination. A native of Nova Scotia, he graduated from Queen's University, Kingston, Ontario, and is one of five brothers in the Christian ministry. He served churches in Halifax, Nova Scotia; Regina, Saskatchewan; Toronto, Ontario and Edmonton, Alberta, where he now resides. He has been prominent in the movement for Christian unity and is the author of two books.

How would you know an Apostle if you were to see one? Ask Paul. "I bear on my body the marks of Jesus," he testified. How would you recognize a missionary of the first rank? Ask David Livingstone. The question actually arose when he was about to be buried in Westminster Abbey. How do we know, the people said, that it is really his body? Can we depend on these poor natives who came from the heart of Africa to the coast and from there to London? The question was finally settled. A friend of Livingstone's, a doctor, made his examination and declared, "Yes, this is his body; here is the hand that was crushed by the lion which had attacked him." The bones had knitted, but the signs were still there.

Or if you will, ask Stanley Jones. He will tell you, in his *Christ of the Mount,* of Judson the famous Baptist missionary. Sentenced to prison, Judson underwent unspeakable sufferings while lying in stocks for many a weary month. On gaining his release, he asked the king of Burma for permission to go to a certain city to preach his gospel. "I am willing for a dozen preachers to go to that city," replied the king, "but not you. Not with those hands. My people are not fools enough to listen to your *words,* but they will not be able to resist those scarred hands." Those hands, says Dr. Jones, were authoritative.

The Future of the Church

So his friends knew the Master by his manner of approach, by the loftiness of his claims, by the gentleness of his spirit and the tenderness with which he spoke. True enough, but they were once and forever convinced when he showed them his hands. In the strength of this conviction, they went forth to preach the good news that God was in Christ reconciling the world unto himself; to establish the Church in every part of the then known world; to bear witness with burning passion and power to a living and glorified Redeemer.

We are somewhat concerned these days about the future of the Church, because of the apathy and complacency of her friends, and because of the apparent enthusiasm and open warfare of her enemies. And we have some anxiety about the ministry of today, the feebleness of the response being made by young men to the call of the Church for full time service. We agree with Henry Drummond that our greatest need is not more of us but a better breed. I am not thinking of the upstanding, alert young men, young men who came before us today for ordination. I was present at convocation when they graduated, listening with keen interest to the recital of their academic standing, and I am certain they will render great service in the ministry of the Church.

The call is for men of physical endowments equal to the strain and stress of the work today; men of intellectual discipline able to take their place in a society where education is no longer confined to the few; men of moral courage who will not hesitate to call for the translation of the high principles of the kingdom in terms of modern social, economic and national relationships; men of spiritual outlook, human interest, kindness of heart and warmth of sympathy, able to minister to the brokenhearted.

The Minister's Opportunities

I know of no calling which gives a man a wider scope for the dedication and exercise of all his gifts than does the ministry. If a man is musical, he may join an orchestra; if an organizer, he may join a labor union; if a financier, he may go into a bank; if a teacher, he may enter the educational field; if a public speaker, he may find his way to parliament. But as a minister of the Christian Church, he may use all these gifts in the one calling. The minister must always be a *teacher* as his Master was; an *organizer* in the congregation with hundreds of officers to stimulate and encourage, an organizer in an institution whose field is the world, and still more important, an organizer of his ideas so that his message may come home to his people with vitality and force; a *financier,* for we have no purgatory with which to finance all our enterprises; a *musician,* for half the service of public worship is musical; a *public speaker,* since the sermon continues to be the outstanding feature in all our evangelical churches. I know of no gift or talent of which a man is possessed that he cannot use and consecrate in the ministry of the Christian Church of today.

We are concerned, let me repeat, about the Church of tomorrow and the ministry of today. But our anxieties and concerns should vanish like mist before the rising sun as our people come to realize the significance of the cross of Christ, symbolizing the eternal principle of sacrificial love, and as our ministers experience the validity, the apostolicity and the authority of the mighty ordination of the pierced hands.

Denominational Number

The Pulpit's August issue this year will be devoted to sermons by LUTHERAN pastors. Our readers are invited to use the form on page 26 in recommending the names of Lutheran pastors whose sermons they would like to read.

The Protestant Witness

There is a Reformation inheritance which we lose at our peril, and there is a Protestant witness to be borne alike with charity and with boldness. It is the preacher's task to offer, as God enables him, "A declaration of those things which are most surely believed among us." There is a Protestant witness. But we do not preach it because it is Protestant. We preach it because we veritably believe it is God's truth for us.—*Angus Dun, Bishop of Washington, D. C., Protestant Episcopal Church, in an address before the Chicago Sunday Evening Club.*

The Power of Creative Life

By Eugene Peacock

For I am not ashamed of the gospel: it is the power of God for salvation to every one who has faith. Romans 1:16.

THERE are some rare spirits in the world for whom religion is a vital force. To many of us, however, religion is a sense of duty rather than a feeling of power. It is a burden to be borne instead of a power that lifts. Indeed, one of the most disturbing facts about organized religion today, in the experience of many church members, is the apparent absence of religion as a vital and saving force. How can we revitalize our faith?

There is hardly a better way to do this than to seek the springs of creative life in a powerful personality such as the apostle Paul.

In one of his little books, Elton Trueblood writes of the *Fellowship of the Unashamed.* Paul must have originated fellowship, for, in a day when it was dangerous to be known as a Christian—when the label *Christian* had about the same connotation as the term *criminal*—Paul was so enthusiastic about his religion that he eagerly declared to the world, "I am not ashamed." This note of pride in his faith differs broadly from the attitude of too many modern disciples who want the quiet respectability of church membership but carefully avoid the social embarrassment of becoming vigorously Christian.

The Power of God

Paul's dramatic conversion, coming as a sensational release from bondage and fear, brought with it a sense of the power of God. This radical experience became such a genuine force in his life that he felt he could do all things through Christ. While God's power was very real to Paul, its importance to him lay essentially in what that power accomplished. He says that "It is the power of God for salvation."

Paul did not mean by salvation what many people would like it to mean. They would like salvation to be a kind of insurance against danger, injury or misfortune. When their faith does not make them physically and materially secure, they often lose confidence in God and become cynical. Far from keeping Paul out of trouble, his conception of salvation got him into trouble and finally cost him his life. His catalog of misfortunes, which included persecution, stonings, beatings, shipwrecks and imprisonment, came *after,* not *before,* his conversion.

What Paul meant by salvation had to do with ultimates. He never expected special favors and exemptions on this earth. His faith was firm in the confidence that, in the long run, God would win and the faithful would be vindicated in the great battle with evil. Furthermore, in his own experience, Paul had found that God gave him the inner fortitude to live victoriously, regardless of life's outer circumstances.

Creative Power

This is a lesson our generation needs to learn. Social forces and mass movements that sweep over the world often seem so enormous and irresistible that individuals despair of pitting their puny strength against them. They throw up their hands in surrender, crying, "What's the use?"

The crucial question before us, therefore, is "How can we get Paul's creative power?" According to Paul, the gospel "is the power of God for salvation to every one who has *faith.*" When one mentions faith, he can almost immediately hear the doors of many minds slam shut, for we are part of a generation that has been conditioned against faith. We tend to look askance at faith because it so often has been interpreted to mean the fanciful and unreal. As one little fellow put it, "Faith is believing what you know ain't so."

If anyone thinks Paul meant faith in that sense, let him at once disabuse his mind. Any force that could enter his life, and make him the creative religious genius he undoubtedly was, certainly cannot be termed fanciful or unreal. It was as real as the power of the atomic bomb. Saving faith is not so much subscription to a creed as it is trust in God and complete surrender to him.

The sum of the matter, if we really want the power of a creative life, is this: God is trustworthy. He is dependable. We can rely on his love and rest on his mercy. He will not let us down if we will tear every idol of pride from the throne of our lives and, in complete humility, trust in him. Whoever wants the power of a creative life can find it in the gospel of Christ which is "the power of God for salvation to every one who has faith."

EUGENE PEACOCK is pastor of St. Francis Street Methodist Church, Mobile, Ala. After graduating from Millsaps College, he took his theological work at Emory University. Before taking the Mobile pastorate, he organized and served for three years as pastor of the Fairlington Methodist Church in Arlington, Va.

Confirmation

By Victor E. Beck

Gustavus Adolphus Lutheran Church, New York, N. Y.

FOR home and loving care
That brought us unto thee
On arms of faith and prayer
In tender infancy,
O Lord of life and power,
We thank thee in this hour.

For Church that points to God,
And thy Living Word;
For shepherd's staff and rod;
For grace our souls has stirred;
O Lord of life and power,
We thank thee in this hour.

Dear Lord, be thou our guide
Through unknown future days;
And, ever by our side,
Direct our faltering ways.
O Lord of life and power,
So pray we in this hour.

Then shall our life, secure,
Be pleasing unto thee;
By thee kept strong and pure,
Victorious we shall be.
O Lord of life and power,
We bless thee in this hour.

Pulpit Post

Augustine and the Ladies Aid

SIR: Mr. Bennett in the March Pulpit asks, "Should Ministers Be Neurotic?" Good! Personally, I'm for having more neurotics as ministers. I know a clergyman who has a beautiful tenor voice, but his sermons are dull. Why shouldn't he be allowed to strum his ukulele after the morning offering and sing a la St. Francis? On the other hand, his sermons might gain spiritual depth—authenticity, as they say—if he spoke in tongues or worked himself into a trance.

Let's use so-called neurotic saints as models for our ministers in the humdrum, workaday world. It would do us all good. There's only one thing about St. Bernard of Clairvaux, St. Theresa and St. Augustine that bothers me, though. How did they handle the Ladies Aid?

DIOGENES CRUIKSHANK.

Conference on Church and Peace

SIR: The Church Peace Mission under the chairmanship of Rev. Albert E. Day, D.D., minister of Mount Vernon Place Methodist Church, Baltimore, Md., announces the calling of a Conference on Church and Peace to be held December 7-10, 1953, in the Central Methodist Church, Detroit, Mich., of which Dr. Henry Hitt Crane is the minister. The Conference will deal largely with the basic theological problems which pacifists and non-pacifists—those Christians who believe participation in war may be justified and those who reject that stand—alike confront.

The Conference is called in part in anticipation of the Assembly of the World Council of Churches of Christ to be held in Evanston, Ill., in August, 1954.

Those desiring further information about the Detroit Conference should write the Organizing Secretary for the Conference, George M. Houser, 513 W. 166th St., New York 32, N. Y.

GEORGE M. HOUSER.

Form in Worship

SIR: According to Seidenspinner's "Imagination and Worship" (April), my people for over 100 years have witnessed wrong "liturgical action" when their ministers approached God in prayer by facing human beings in whom the Spirit of God is supposed to dwell, rather than by facing "the center of the presence of God" in an inanimate object, the altar.

The editor's warning (same issue), not to mechanize religious education through the old preoccupation with method, may well be directed to specialists in liturgics whose preoccupation with form so frequently mechanizes worship.

GERHARD A. FRITZ.
St. Paul Evangelical and Reformed,
Columbia, Ill.

Bennett and William Temple

SIR: With mingled apprehension and dismay we read Dennis Bennett's affirmative answer to the question, "Should Ministers be Neurotic?" The "neurotic, irrational, maladjusted Augustine" is a better instrument in the hands of God than "the balanced, rational, well-adjusted Pelagius" because "the successes of God are built on human weakness. . . ." It reminds one of a bit of doggerel penned by the late William Temple (revised version):

In the Church, after Freud had hit it,
Said a Vicar, "There's no use to quit it.
We can't be adjusted
So don't be disgusted,
Just baptize your neurosis
And forget it!"

EARL H. FURGESON.
Westminster Theological Seminary,
Westminster, Md.

Pearson Reprints

SIR: Roy Pearson's sermon in the March issue of The Pulpit and his sermon in the December 17th issue of the *Century* should be made available in quantity for distribution to congregations!

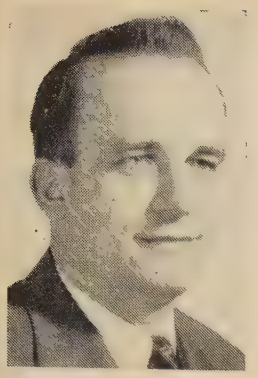
AL BURTON ELIASON.
Methodist,
Markesan, Wis.

A Georgia Cracker

SIR: The February Pulpit has been read with great interest. Let us have more of this type. The sermons are inspiring and instructive. This has helped me to make up my mind to renew my subscription.

I wish to commend Morton S. Enslin for his fine contributions. I have little patience with those whose minds have become dated. I am a southerner by birth and rearing —a Georgia Cracker—but I am glad that I am not sectional or set against new ideas.

S. M. PENN.
Blackwood Congregational Christian.
Headland, Ala.



Stepping Stone or Challenge?

By Frank A. Kostyu

YOU have a fine plant and a beautiful church," remarked a fellow pastor from a large city church in neighboring Cincinnati.

"Yes," I replied, "our people are quite proud of it."

"You know," he continued, "in four years I would like to exchange churches with you. This is the type of church that I have always dreamed of retiring to."

How many times it is expressed in official Church groups that, if a pastor has difficulties in serving a city church, the best thing to do with him is to send him out to the town and country church! Shall this inference that the town and country church is a stepping stone continue, or shall we revise our impressions and look upon the rural church as a magnetic challenge?

First, let us examine the attitudes that have led us to consider it as a stepping stone. Perhaps one of the places where we have been conditioned is in our seminary training. Courses in the past have been taught with the intimation that prospective ministers will leave the rural areas after a few years of service for the attractions of city congregations. Lectures, courses of study and classes are generally conducted with this point in view. In addition, our country's most famous university and seminary lectureships have seldom been held by pastors successful in the rural church. It is only in recent years that seminaries have offered more than a minor elective course or two on the "Rural Community."

Official Attitudes

The thinking of official circles of the Church also can be brought into criticism. How many pastors and church leaders have the impression that there is something wrong with a man if he doesn't leave a town and country church within a few years! They tend to look down their noses when you explain, "I'm from that little open country town near Chicago or Cincinnati." "Glad to know you," they respond and then act as if you have a communicable disease.

Those in responsible Church positions look to the town and country church as a place either to start the ministry or to retire to in old age. Perhaps that is the reason that positions of leadership are rarely assigned to ministers from the rural church. In our own denomination it's surprising how little recognition is given to rural pastors in Synodical and General Synod offices, even though the greater ratio of our congregations are in the rural areas. If the moral tone of the entire Church is to be lifted, the rural ministry will have to receive a larger recognition.

Changes in Rural Life

Even members of the town and country church may consider it a stepping stone. They sense that a young man starting in the rural church will move within a short period of time. Often they are proud of this fact; they are pleased to see him "promoted."

The Church at large must concern itself with a basic reason for short pastorates—salaries. It must be awakened to an inequality that is found right within its own back yard. Through subsidies, if necessary, the income of the rural pastor must be increased. His cost of living is not less because he lives near the farm. The days of filling the pastor's storehouse with produce have nearly disappeared. Today the rural pastor must have an income that will assure him of a standard of living equal to that of a city pastor.

The present day town and country church is a definite challenge. Need it be pointed out that rapid changes have occurred in rural life within the past twenty-five years? Take for instance the field of rural economics. The development of transportation has made obsolete the horse and buggy. Fine roads have been constructed. The telephone, radio and television have brought the farmer closer to events shaping the lives of every one of us. He no longer secures products and news from the cracker barrel and general store. The big city department store is now only a few minutes away. Farm people are well dressed and well educated. Modern farm machinery has increased production and earning power in addition to giving the rural home more leisure time. Numerous organizations not only have helped the farmer to take his place in the affairs of the world, but have made his voice influential in politics and government.

In recent years urban population has been migrating from the city, and the old-time family ties of the rural community have been weakened by urban pressures. Visitation, picnics, quilting parties and those "good old days" of family reunions are gradually vanishing.

With these changes the demands of a rural church are exceptionally challenging. The rural church needs a vigorous and consecrated ministry. It is required of a man in the rural field that he believe in the rural life and that he express a desire to satisfy its needs. This then calls for wholehearted devotion and understanding.

There are thousands of farm homes in which Christian ministers have never set foot. It has been estimated that 13,000,000 rural children have had no religious training. Rural youth are bewildered, haunted by economic insecurity and doubts as to what the future holds in store. Shall it be military training or further education?

Rural Opportunities

Opportunities are vast for pastoral ministrations and counseling. There is need for pastors who can heal the broken spirit, renew lost hopes and advance the spiritual strength of their people. The rural church needs a man to whom the community can look as a confidant, personal friend and counselor; one who shares intimately the life of the people, who will work side by side with his constituents so that through him the community will be banded together in the spirit of an ever-present Christ.

The rural church needs a pastor who is more than just a preaching, baptizing, marrying and burying parson. Sermons must be intelligent and related to life situations. In many town and country churches are lawyers, doctors, druggists, business men and college-bred farmers to keep the pastor striving to do his best.

The rural church is a living challenge with great rewards. To walk across a freshly ploughed field, to see the newly turned earth, to scent the freshly cut hay, to stand out in the silence of God's world and see the

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FRANK A. KOSTYU has been pastor of the First Evangelical and Reformed Church, West Alexandria, Ohio, since 1949. A native of Ohio, he attended Heidelberg College and Eden Theological Seminary. He served a previous parish in Dayton and is continuing graduate studies at Hamma Divinity School.

handiwork of his universe is a source of strength and spiritual nourishment. It reminds one of the quotation by Sherwood Anderson: "When at night the moon comes up and the wind plays in the corn, a man hears the whispering of the gods."

Jesus must have felt this way. Here he saw a man sowing a seed, there a delicate flower blossoming in a field; here a farmer whose barns were too small for his selfish pride, there a woman busy at her household duties. Then there was the almost infinitesimal mustard seed, the unproductive fig tree, the vineyards, the wheat and the tares. God was not far away.

John Frederick Oberlin saw this picture. Offered a city church because he "deserved a promotion," he replied: "No, I will never leave this place. It took me ten years to learn every head in this parish, making inventory of the moral, intellectual and domestic wants of each. I have laid my plans for the future. I must have at least ten years to carry these into execution, and I shall need the following ten to correct their faults and vices. God has confided this flock to me. Why should I abandon it?" And there he remained for forty years, not because it was just a place to gain valuable experience, not because it was a place to retire, but because he saw in his rural church a challenge.

Sermon Summaries

Is It I?

A Communion Meditation

John 13:21-30.

MY name is John. Sometimes I have been called "the beloved disciple." My mind often goes back to that upper room. It was a lovely spring night. The paschal moon shone in all its fullness, casting furtive shadows all around. Jesus had gathered the twelve with him to celebrate the Passover, but there seemed to be something more on his mind. We gathered with a sense of impending doom; a subdued excitement was evident. When we arrived in the room, we were all tired; our feet were dirty from the long journey. There was no servant to wash our feet, and none of us made any move to take the responsibility, so Jesus himself took a basin of water and a towel and washed all of our feet. We were embarrassed. When Jesus had finished he again took his place, but he seemed troubled, even preoccupied. He predicted, "Truly, truly, I say to you, one of you will betray me." We looked at each other.

Yes, it was Judas who betrayed him to the Roman and Jewish leadership. But I have betrayed him too. I was not called one of the "sons of thunder" without reason. I went to sleep on the mount of transfiguration; my Christ carried on alone. When we returned to the valley after the transfiguration, I like a super-pious Pharisee forbade a man to work miracles in the name of Jesus because he was not one of us—and the Master had to rebuke me. Then in the Garden of Gethsemane, while Jesus agonized, Peter, James and I slept—even though twice he had asked us to watch and pray with him. It was I!

Judas

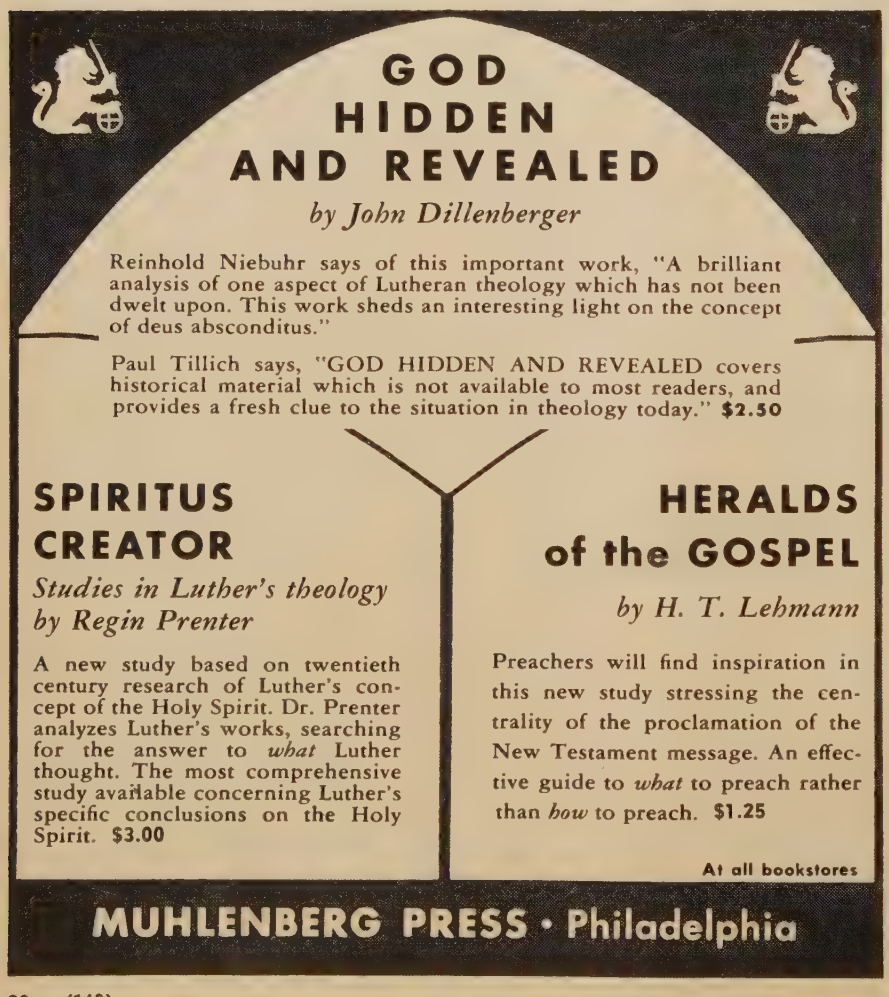
My name is Judas; my father was Simon Iscariot. It was I. Jesus said that evening that he would give the morsel to the one who would betray him. And when he had dipped it, he gave it to me. He looked me in the eye and said, "What you are going to do, do quickly." I was frantic. I got up, opened the door, walked out, and closed the door. ". . . *And it was night.*" I tell you it *was* night, the blackest night in all eternity. It was the darkest night for my soul. I sold my Lord and Master for a trifle. In the garden, a few hours later, my treachery had the last refinement. I made a kiss of affection to be a kiss of treachery.

My name carries more scorn and revulsion than any other name. Most people can honestly refute the charge of treason, when it is thought of—and it usually is—as a once-for-all dramatic renunciation of faith and sworn allegiance. But life's tests rarely come in such an explicit manner. They creep up in unnoticed choices. Before we realize it we come to the edge and are over the edge of some kind of betrayal. It was I!

Peter

My name is Peter. Simon Peter. I'm a brash, impetuous individual. Sometimes I like to think that through the years I have mellowed a bit. In a sense I have, perhaps. But that night in the upper room, oh, what a tragic remembrance.

My heart aches over the times I betrayed him. Talking with us one day, Jesus asked, "Who do man say that I am?" Several of the twelve told Jesus what they had heard. Then Jesus said, "But who do you say that I am?" I spoke up, "You are the Christ, the Son of the living God." Jesus was pleased with what I had said and he gave me a new name: "You are Peter, and on this rock I will build my Church." Jesus reasoned that if we had learned the lesson of truth—that he was the incarnate Son of God—he could go on to the next lesson and tell us that as the perfect sacrifice for the sin of the world he must go to Jerusalem, suffer many indignities and be slain. When I told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him he was wrong, Jesus seemed hurt and a bit angry. "Get behind me, Satan! You are a hindrance to me; for you are not on the side of God, but of men."

That night in the upper room he said that some one of us would deny him. I was brave and really sincere when I said to him, "Even though they all fall away, I will not." But I did. There in the courtyard of the palace of the high priest, as I stood with others about the fire, I could not take the taunts of the servant girl and the others. I denied him not just once, but three times—and I denied him with cursings and oaths. It was I!

My Name

My name is Frank William Montgomery. I was there that night just as I was present at the crucifixion the next day. My sins drove the nails into his hands and his feet. When I point a finger at Judas I find three fingers pointing at me. When I contemplate the feast of the Lord's table, I find no room for complacency and self-satisfaction. Indeed, when I am sincere, I am inevitably sorrowful, probing my inner being, sensitive to conscience. I must read my own heart and not my neighbor's.

It is I. I betray my Master when I allow my devotion to be worn away without renewal. I betray him when I allow to take place what Branscomb suggests may have happened to Judas—he "must have gone over to the Pharisaic and Sadducean attitude." I often move in circles where our Lord is suspect, regarded as highly "irregular," or disregarded entirely. Breathing that atmosphere, I may come to have my view of him subtly merged with that of the powerful secular "authorities" of today.

It is I. I betray him when I try to make him fit into my way of life and thought, instead of changing my thoughts and ways to fit into him. I betray him when I give way to the cautious feeling that he "goes too far"; when I believe he is "too radical." But, because it is *I*, how grateful I am for his invitation to come and remember that his death is for me and for you. The shedding of his blood and the breaking of his body gives to us what we cannot do for ourselves! — *Frank William Montgomery, First United Presbyterian, St. Clairsville, Ohio.*

God of the Chaplains

Having nothing, and yet possessing everything.—II Cor. 6:10.

THE story of the chaplains on the U.S. transport Dorchester, known, surely, to most Americans by now, was as thrilling a tale as ever came from any war. The Rickenbacker story, with which so many of us are familiar, had its happy conclusion; the men, all but one, were restored to life and love. Who can say that the story of the Dorchester quartet did not have its happy ending also?

It was at 1:15 A.M. on February 3, 1943 that the Dorchester was torpedoed in the icy waters of the Atlantic within 90 miles of its Greenland destination. It sank in 27 minutes. Of the 904 men aboard, 678 were reported lost. The Dorchester was not the only boat torpedoed in the war, nor was its death list the longest, but something happened on its deck that day which the world will long remember.

Within 27 minutes all was over, but in that time Alexander D. Goode, a Jewish rabbi, John P. Washington, a Roman Catholic priest, and George L. Fox and Clark Poling, Protestant clergymen, had demonstrated in a magnificent way the high possibilities of spiritual unity. Available life jackets had been dispensed as quickly as possible to as many men as could grasp them. Finally, stripping themselves of their own life jackets and handing them to others, the four chaplains clasped hands and went down together. They were never seen again by anyone. One survivor of the scene writes: "With utter disregard of self . . . the chaplains stood hand in hand, praying to the God they served."

Perhaps we ought to think about the God of the four chaplains—not

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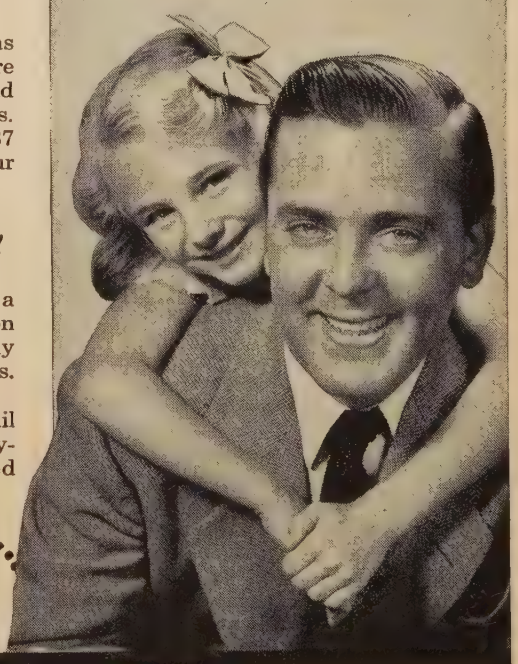

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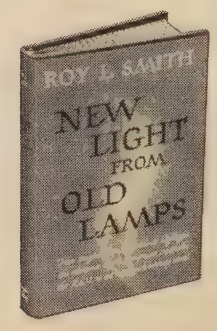
as each had been taught in his particular religious doctrine, but as they experienced him in a moment of supreme challenge. Each man was certain in his own heart and mind that this was it—a showdown with the Eternal, when the veil was about to be removed, and they would know God as they had never known him before.

When they had done what they humanly could, the four chaplains held hands—the Jew, the Roman Catholic, the two Protestants. The heavenly Father was the God to whom each of them looked. He was the same God in whom the patriarchs of centuries ago put their trust, the same God who led Israel through bondage and freedom, the same God of whom the Psalmist sang and the prophets spoke. He was the same God whom Jesus addressed as his heavenly Father, and of whom, to the woman at the well, he said, "God is a spirit, and those who worship him must worship in spirit and truth."

This is the same God with whom you and I have constant fellowship. You don't have to find yourself adrift on a life raft on the high seas, or on a sinking ship with no possible means of rescue. You don't have to be trapped in a mine, knowing that the desperate digging above you will never be finished in time, so far as you are concerned. You don't have to become the mangled victim of a wreck, or the emaciated patient suffering from a horrible disease to know this God of the Dorchester chaplains. He is the same God that, wherever you go and whatever you do, is "closer than breathing and nearer than hands and feet."

One of the first things a military unit will do upon changing its position, either in advancing or retreating, is to set up a means of communication with headquarters. Across the years many of us change our positions, we neglect the Church, we drop our religious habits, we take on practices that greatly impair our adequacy in today's life. Many of us have actually dropped all semblance of communication with God—the same God as that of the four chaplains. Isn't it about time we looked to our means of communication?—*D. Glyn Lewis, Congregational, Newark Valley, N. Y.*

NEW LIGHT FROM OLD LAMPS



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Life Triumphs Over Death

MANKIND has always believed in life after death. The Christian faith in immortality is found in Jesus' answer to Job's question.

What do we mean by immortality? Two obvious forms accepted by all are biological immortality and the immortality of influence. Some limit immortality to various expressions of these forms. The Christian concept holds that there is survival of personality, the continuation of life in fellowship with God. Heaven is this life in fellowship with God—here and hereafter.

Why is immortality central in the Christian faith? Some don't want to talk about immortality. "One world at a time," they say. Dr. Georgia Harkness suggests four reasons why immortality is central to our faith. (1) Christianity was born in the resurrection experience of the disciples. (2) Immortality belongs with the kind of God and the understanding of man which Jesus not only taught but demonstrated. (3) God could not let men's lives be abruptly cut off without hope. (4) Our faith stresses the infinite worth of human personality.

How face the fact of death? We must face the fact of death as one of the facts of life. Considerations which Trueblood suggests purely in the human context include: Whatever we lose, we can be grateful for what we have already had; be loyal to the ones we have lost and thus continue their lives vicariously on earth; lessen our personal sorrow by sharing with others. The Christian adds to these considerations the ability to face the fact of death with the facts of Christian faith. He remembers Jesus' words: "Because I live, you will live also."—*Hoover Rupert, First Methodist, Jackson, Mich.*

Pulpit Patter

By Morton S. Enslin

'Our Rosebud Ministers'

A RECENT mail brought a post card with the following message: "I have a present anger you may wish to develop: Our rosebud ministers. My people return from Florida or some other church and gush about how they saw a minister baptize children or adults with rosebuds that floated on the water. Or they lay rosebuds on the altar to 'welcome newborn citizens' and then send them to the mothers. You know the rest. Sloppy sentiment that washes over devout practice."

My correspondent was doubly right. I do know "all"—at least some—"of the rest," although so far I have been mercifully spared from seeing this particular example of the *mysterium tremendum artis liturgicae;* and I am definitely desirous of broadcasting his disgust which I distinctly share.

It is not that I have any animus against rosebuds. They have their place, as my old friend Apuleius pointed out so trenchantly a good many years ago. Having had the misfortune to be turned into an ass, he was turned back into the form of a man by eating a bouquet of rosebuds during a celebration of the mysteries of Isis. I commend *that* use of them to our rosebud ministers.

It will be a rare reader of this journal who has not seen plenty of similar examples of prettifying religion by the gush-and-giggle boys. Beauty and loveliness are no foes of genuine religion, although many nonconformists with a sturdy Puritan background still find it a bit hard so to believe. But there is a long sea mile between genuine beauty and the increasingly common, pathetically self-conscious attempts at prettifying. Wrist watches undoubtedly have their place; but when I saw several of them clasped on the wrist of a statue of the Virgin Mary in the Holy Sepulchre in Jerusalem, I was not impressed—favorably. I seriously doubt that the application of several pieces of oh-so-ducky costume jewelry on the Venus de Milo would increase her attraction, although I have been inclined at times to wonder if it would not be attempted were one of our Hollywood directors or one of our more up-and-coming clerical stage managers to become director of the Louvre.

It appears to me that all these antics are in large part an attempt to escape from reality. By jazzing up the facts of life, we make them easier, less demanding. How we love to do it in the case of death. Actually for some the word *death* itself is suspect if not actually taboo. Rather the dear one has "gone home," is "no longer with us," is "in the arms of Jesus." That that is the way to rob death of its sting I seriously doubt. Sugar-coating on pills of bitter medicine, the convenient little soluble capsules which contain the quinine, may—and, I readily concede, do—have their place in pharmacology. I sincerely doubt the wisdom of the wholesale carry-over into life and religion of these devices. For some of us, who by heritage or conviction find genuine values in believers' baptism, mighty little is gained—and a tremendous amount lost—by prettifying it through the calculated use of closing curtains, a near sunrise effect achieved by spotlights, chromos of the River Jordan painted as a backdrop, and the rest.

"But these things appeal to the emotions, do things to people, to soften them up." That there is a real place for emotion in religion I do not for a moment question. Of course there is. Religion is, and should be, of the heart as well as of the head. But the appeal to the emotions should be an honest and genuine one; and this is not contrived by falling rose petals, by a would-be lambent haze or glow achieved by spotlights equipped with multicolored greens, by sacred chromos or other *objets d'art* arranged by perspiring pulpit stage managers, or even by having the congregation carol brightly (as a response to the Scripture lesson which has highlighted the passage: "Behold the birds of the heaven . . .") "like the birdies sing, Tweet, tweet, tweet, tweet, tweet."

These and their sundry modifications may—I can conceive it, although frankly I cannot imagine it—"do things" to some people; they may, as one of my acquaintances recently told me, "make electric sparks run up and down my spine." But surely it is still possible to produce essentially the same sort of spiritual binge in a more direct and honest way, and one which, I fancy, actually would prove far less costly in the end.

Yes, Mr. Creager, I quite agree with you. A plague upon all Rosebud Ministers. The gospel may be simple; it is surely not so simple as that.

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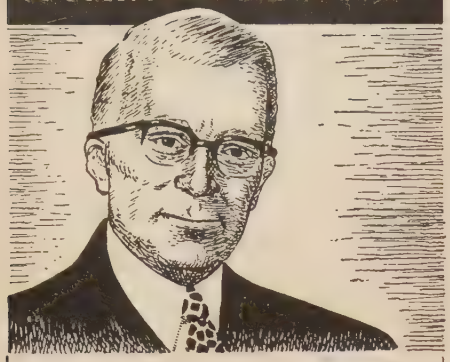
A PARSON PONDERS



"I'd like to—but I can't afford it"—replies the preacher who is urged to make sensible provision for the future. It sounds conclusive except that we nearly all manage to afford to buy what we consider to be a necessity.

But the more disturbing factor demands consideration. Do you know what it costs to protect your family? Sometimes it means questioning an axiom to suggest that the report of the high cost is like the rumor of Mark Twain's death—grossly exaggerated.

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Can a preacher afford *not* to make such a wise investment? Spending money "for that which satisfieth not" deserves the harsh words used by the prophet of old and echoed by the sages of today.

Any buy, however, which satisfies so completely and permanently constitutes an imperative for the man whose chances for making a fortune are strictly limited.

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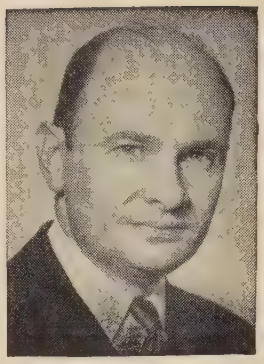

Come Let Us Worship

By Clarence Seidenspinner

Experimenting with Worship Forms

CONTEMPORARY worship faces the danger of crystallizing its liturgical forms. The history of worship during the last 30 years has been of great interest at this point. In the early 1920s, when we awakened to the fact that the average Protestant service was nondescript, our first reaction was an enthusiastic "Let's do something about this." What to do was the big question.

This question led to the second reaction. We returned to historical sources. We studied the liturgy of the Eastern Orthodox, the mass of the Roman Catholic Church, the matins and evening prayer of the Anglican Church and the adaptations of Lutheranism. We answered the question by saying, "Let's adapt these services to our own needs." Consequently, the Protestant liturgy began to assume the form of Anglican matins or the Lutheran service.

Hurried Publication

Our third reaction was to get these adaptations into a permanent prayer book as quickly as possible. Most of the major denominations, in recognition of the dangers of procrastination, hurried to the publishers with sheaves of services which testified to their raids upon the ancient services. One and all, they might just as well have ordered copies of the Book of Common Prayer. This would have been simpler for everyone.

The fourth reaction followed naturally enough. Pastors busy with administration said, "Let us now cease worrying over these uncertain liturgical matters and content ourselves with imitations. The church has published its book of worship. Let us settle back to use it with no questions asked."

We are not ready for the final word in worship, however. We need to keep our forms and practices open and plastic. Why swing from the nondescript services of the early 20th century to the ancient formularies of the early churches? Our own day calls for continuous and intelligent experimentation before we crystallize. It is true that experimentation takes time, courage and study. Nevertheless, stout-hearted pastors are not alone. They will find many others who feel the same way. Pastors need to keep a liturgical weather eye open for possible new developments.

Take the simple but effective experimentation that the girls of Stephens College are making. Week after week they meet for an evening prayer period patterned after their own ideas and conducted by themselves. In this service one girl reads the opening prayer that she has written. Another girl lights a candle of remembrance and dedication and reads a fine meditation that she has prepared. An anthem lifts the heart to God, and a third student gives a brief meditation on the basic theme of the hour. This is followed by a prayer of commitment.

Bold Experimentation

Or take the bold experimentation of William Norman Guthrie, who for many years was the rector of St. Mark's Church in the Bowery. He used the traditional service of Morning Prayer, but on Sunday afternoons and other special occasions he found opportunities for thrilling liturgical experimentation. Some of these services are contained in his two books: *The Offices of Mystical Religion* and *The Seven Oracles From the Cross*, his notable Good Friday service. The individual pastor, of course, would be ill advised to imitate what Dr. Guthrie has done at St. Mark's, but these services ought to stimulate his imagination and give him courage to do something comparable in his own church.

Festival Day Litanies

Excellent experimentation is being made also at the Epworth-Euclid Methodist Church at Cleveland, where one of the finest students of worship in the country, Dr. Oscar Thomas Olson, is pastor. The liturgy for the festival days is particularly notable and interesting. In the Easter Day sunrise service last year, for example, a fine litany with the spirit of a new urgency was included. An Advent service included a profoundly moving Christmas litany. And the anniversary service of last October contained an intercession for the survival of the Church that must have brought the worship of the congregation to a sharp devotional focus. These freshly written materials and liturgical rearrangements, intelligently done, constitute the sort of contemporary craftsmanship in worship that unnumbered pastors ought now to be enjoying.

Pulpit Paragraphs

Contributed by Readers of The Pulpit

• *The Greatness of God*

DURING the war years the captain of one of the largest ore freighters on the Great Lakes was a man named Parsons. He was a Christian gentleman and a fearless follower of his Lord. Captain Parsons would often try to arrange his sailing time so that he could attend the worship service at church while the boat was being loaded with ore. One day I asked him why his spirit was so gentle and reverent and why he was so different from the common conception of a sea captain. His reply was unforgettable. He said: "The common conception of a sea captain or a lake freighter captain as a profane man is all wrong. You cannot sail the Great Lakes or the sea without coming to have a profound respect for the Creator of life. If you have ever been out on Lake Superior or Lake Michigan in a storm, when the waves pick up an ore freighter loaded with ore as if it were a little matchbox, you soon come to have a respect for the greatness of God. Many a time in a storm I have found myself saying, 'Holy, holy, holy, Lord God Almighty,' in the thought of God's greatness and man's littleness. No man can be profane who understands the greatness of God."—*Frank A. Court, St. Paul Methodist, Lincoln, Neb.*

• *They Shall Be One*

A HANDICAPPED couple, who regularly attend my church, are an inspiration to many, especially to all who are married. The husband is totally blind; the wife is extremely lame, barely able to walk with the aid of braces and crutches. Yet what Louisa M. Alcott says of the deformed Dick Brown in *Little Men* can be said of each of them. "Dick Brown's affliction was a crooked back, yet he bore his burden so cheerfully that Demi once asked him in his queer way, 'Do humps make people good-natured? I'd like one myself if they do.'" Though the radiancy of this couple is real and remarkable, it is not their only boon to others.

These two have truly become one in flesh and spirit. They need each other. She is his eyes, he is the strength of her legs. When walking, she slowly leads the way, while he, with one hand on each side of her waist, walks one step behind—guided by her eyes and at the same time ready to assist her should she slip. Descending steps he moves to her left side, placing her left arm about his neck and his right arm about her waist. Ascending steps he stands directly behind her, with his hands about her waist, and gives, with perfect timing, the little boost that enables her to lift her weight. Upon sitting and rising this ritual of cooperation is repeated.

Many married couples have watched this handicapped couple with wonder, praise and appreciation. As they move among us from Sunday to Sunday, up and down the steps, in and out of the pew, down the church aisle and the street, they are a constant object lesson in consideration and cooperation—a visual statement of the text, "They shall be one." And together they have a happiness and tenderness that have gone out of many marriages because the partners have no constant need of one another.—*Galen E. Hershey, Stevens Memorial Evangelical United Brethren, Des Moines, Iowa.*

Pulpit Calendar

May 3—4th Sunday after Easter.
May 3-10—National Family Week.
May 10—5th Sunday after Easter. Festival of the Christian Home.
May 14—Ascension Day.
May 17—Sunday after the Ascension.
May 24—Whitsunday. The Festival of Pentecost. Christian Unity Sunday.
May 30—Memorial Day.
May 31—Trinity Sunday.
June 7—2nd Sunday after Pentecost.
June 14—3rd Sunday after Pentecost. Children's Sunday.
June 21—4th Sunday after Pentecost.
June 28—5th Sunday after Pentecost. Nature Sunday. Independence Sunday.
July 1—Dominion Day (Canada).
July 4—Independence Day.
July 5—6th Sunday after Pentecost.
July 12—7th Sunday after Pentecost.
July 19—8th Sunday after Pentecost.
July 26—9th Sunday after Pentecost.

SEASONS: Ascension; Pentecost, Kingdomtide.

ALTAR COLORS: Ascension, White; Pentecost, Red; Trinity Sunday and 2nd Sunday after Pentecost, White; Other Sundays after Pentecost, Green.

(Pulpit Calendar lists dates in the calendar of the Christian year and other observances of national or religious significance.)

• *The Eisenhower Confession*

SHORTLY after President Eisenhower took office he attended a breakfast of the International Christian Leadership group in Washington. There he made what I consider a confession. He said:

> There is a need we all have in these days and times for some help which comes from outside ourselves as we face the multitude of problems that are part of this confusing situation. . . . Today I think that prayer is just simply a necessity, because by prayer I believe we mean an effort to get in touch with the infinite.

In these confusing times, the President of the United States is saying that we need the help of a power "outside ourselves." We need to get in touch with the infinite. We need perspective. To take a long look at what we are doing.

We are all aware that until his inauguration the President had little to do with organized religion. He has explained it in part by the fact that he moved from army post to army post. But that explains little to me as a minister. It is only typical of a lot of Americans who have "never staked down their faith," to use the words of Dr. Elson, whose Washington church the President joined. As president of Columbia University, he should have identified himself with the Church, one might have thought. So then it seems to me that this act—this confession—is all the more important. As the *Christian Century* pointed out, the fact that he became a member of the Presbyterian Church in Washington suggests "a certain humble acknowledgment of need for the spiritual reinforcement which membership in a church might bring. It demonstrated also a sensitive recognition that among other things he owed it to the nation to provide in his own life an example in allegiance to and support of the institutions of religion."—*Ellsworth L. Richardson, Congregational Church of Rogers Park, Chicago.*

• *High Aim of Marriage*

THE goal of marriage is the building, by a man and a woman, of a third new world, which is neither his nor hers, but *theirs*. It is a world which could never exist for either alone. It is a third *new* world which springs into reality only out of all that he and she together bring and which depends on their cooperative living for its creation. No doubt the Old Testament writer was thinking in much the same spirit when, in the first pages of Genesis, he suggested: "Therefore a man leaves his father and his mother and cleaves to his wife, and they become one flesh." The supreme aim of marriage is for a man and a woman, out of their own separate worlds, to build a third new world, physically to be sure, but also emotionally, intellectually, morally, spiritually, which is neither his nor hers but *theirs*, which could not exist if they had not been drawn together, which would disappear if they were ever drawn apart. The high aim of marriage is that two may become one, in every significant way.—*William E. Kerstetter, First Methodist, St. Paul, Minn.*

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Each year the August issue of The Pulpit is devoted to a report on the status of preaching in a selected denomination. Sermons printed will be contributed by ministers of that denomination.

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Ministry of Music

By Ernest K. Emurian

Old Favorites

OF THE many polls seeking American Christendom's favorite hymns and songs, the one conducted by *Christian Herald* is more usually exhaustive and authentic. Recent reports from this source indicate that the public favors these selections in this order: (1) "The Old Rugged Cross," (2) "What a Friend We Have in Jesus," (3) "I Love to Tell the Story," (4) "In the Garden," (5) "Rock of Ages." Much ado is made of the people's preference for "old favorite hymns." However, most of these popular winners are neither *old* nor *hymns*. That they are *favorites*, few will deny.

Rev. George Bennard, author-composer of "Old Rugged Cross," is still alive, 40 years after having penned his perennial favorite in 1913. When this columnist visited the grave of Joseph Scriven ("What a Friend We Have in Jesus") at the Pengelley estate on Lake Rice, near Bewdley, Ontario, some years ago, he interviewed several people who, as small children, knew and loved the author prior to his death in 1886. We visited the room in which he wrote his stanzas in 1855, less than 100 years ago.

Katherine Hankey wrote "I Love to Tell the Story" in 1866, W. G. Fisher composing the music three years later. C. Austin Miles wrote "In the Garden" in 1912. "Rock of Ages," actually the only old hymn in the group, was written by rabid Calvinist Augustus Toplady in the year of American Independence, 1776. As for prolific Fanny Crosby, whose poems are always high on the lists of favorites, she has been dead less than 40 years. My parents met her on their honeymoon, and we cherish photographs of father, mother and "Aunt Fanny."

If the hoary head of age guaranteed popularity and immortality to a hymn or song, more Christians would be singing the earliest Christian hymn extant, "Shepherd of Tender Youth," translated from Clement of Alexandria, eminent 3rd century divine. "All Creatures of Our God and King," by 13th century Francis of Assisi, would be sung with more universal enthusiasm, to say nothing of the hymns of Andrew of Crete (660-732 A.D.) and the Bernards of Clairvaux and Cluny, 12th century poets.

These popular gospel songs are really not old favorites at all. They are *familiar* favorites instead. Their reputation may be due in some measure to their constant repetition. Doubtless there are many songs as old or as new as the five champions that would become as familiar if they were used as often. And, since a hymn is "a paean of praise addressed to or descriptive of one of the members of the Trinity," they are not even hymns in the technical sense of the word. With the exception of "Rock of Ages," they are subjective gospel songs. This in no way detracts from their usefulness, but merely classifies them correctly. In fairness to the great objective hymns of the Church, a poll should carefully distinguish between familiar favorite hymns and familiar favorite gospel songs. Since both of them minister to the varied needs of believers, and both have their proper place in public worship, the distinction should be more carefully and accurately drawn.

Comparing "All Hail the Power of Jesus' Name" with "In the Garden," or "Holy, Holy, Holy" with "I Love to Tell the Story," is like comparing the Pacific ocean with Lake Erie. Each serves purposes peculiar to itself and needs no comparison to prove its individual worth.

Hymn writers could well heed the lessons this poll affords. Three out of the five songs have a chorus or refrain, the unique American contribution to church music. With one exception, the music is built on three or four basic chords, in natural progression. There are no forced progressions, unnatural harmonies, odd intervals. Bennard composed "Old Rugged Cross" on a guitar, using the tonic, subdominant and dominant chords of the chosen key, just as Franz Gruber had done with "Silent Night" that famous Christmas eve in 1818.

While people should be more concerned with singing about God than about themselves, they seem to prefer the latter. Those who criticize their brethren for enjoying the finer gospel songs would do well to remember that the simplicity of their melodies, the precious memories they evoke, and the tender associations which cluster about them give them an appeal the Church will ignore to its own hurt. The vigorous intellectual who wrote "A Mighty Fortress Is Our God" was also the simple sentimentalist who is

credited with the authorship of "Away in a Manger."

Since congregational singing can be both a means to an end and an end in itself, lovers of gospel songs should never substitute singing for the living which the singing inspires. "The Old Rugged Cross" should inspire Christians to take up their own crosses and follow Christ; "I Love to Tell the Story" should result in liberal gifts to missions, in order that others may hear the story too; and we should not be content to stay "In the Garden" with him, when there is a Calvary just beyond the olive trees.

Tender, Loving Care

DOWN at 34th st. and 5th ave. in New York city is the Waldorf-Astoria. The story of its establishment began years ago in Philadelphia when there came one night to a little hotel a middle-aged couple. All the hotels in Philadelphia were filled and they couldn't find a place to sleep. Behind the desk of this crowded hotel was the young manager. When he saw that the woman was ill, he said, "I don't have a room in this house, but I am sorry about your wife. I am young and a night out of bed will not hurt me. Take my room and rest and everything will be all right." The young man did not know these people at all. What he was doing was practicing T.L.C. (tender, loving care).

The next morning the guest asked to see the manager. In the latter's office he produced his card and said, "My name is Astor. I am from New York. You are the best hotel man I have ever met. If you will allow me to do it, I will build for you the greatest hotel ever erected in the United States." And for years this young fellow, George C. Boldt, was the greatest hotel manager in America.

"Be kind to one another, tenderhearted, forgiving." It sounds so gentle, so quieting, doesn't it? But it works. As one Christian to another this morning, looking out on our troubled, perplexed world, I wonder if you don't feel as I do that the solution to most of our problems today is to be found in simple, elemental things such as kindness and appreciation. We can have a better world right here, now, if you and I begin with ourselves to make it better.—*Paul Parks Walenta, Presbyterian, New Hartford, N. Y.*

Correction

In the Easter poem and meditation, "Dust of the Earth," by Charles H. Schmitz, which appeared in our March issue, a line was inadvertently omitted in the third stanza. As corrected, it reads:

BLACK dust.
Black as the oozing, sponging muck of the soft swamp lands.
Growing celery, potatoes, cabbages.
Inky, sooty, black.
Black as the darkest African.
Dust thou art.

These Things Remain

Carlyle Marney

Distinctive in form, dynamic in content, unforgettable in spiritual power and impact, here is preaching that will lay hold upon believer and seeker alike. All people who find that life is something less than perfect will discover in this *different* book the immeasurable value of those spiritual realities which endure when the material things of the world have passed away. They will be challenged to give new allegiance to the "things that remain"—the eternal things of the spirit that come only through Jesus Christ.

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I Need That Lamb
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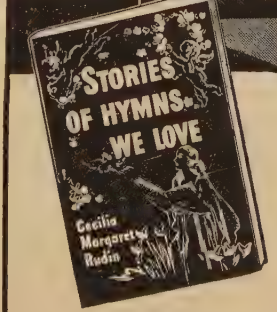

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THE UNFINISHED REFORMATION

by CHARLES CLAYTON MORRISON

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Preachers in Print

Tomorrow's Church

NO minister should come to Reformation Sunday next October without having read the Pulpit editor's latest book, ★★★★*The Unfinished Reformation,* by **Charles Clayton Morrison** (Harper, $3.00). The volume consists of the lectures delivered at the University of Chicago on the William Henry Hoover Foundation and is the April selection of the Religious Book Club. As one who heard these stirring lectures, I would like to predict that they will be the subject of intense discussions among churchmen of every name for at least the next decade. The following tribute and evaluation from the *Religious Book Club Bulletin* (used by permission) helps to substantiate this prediction:

There is something about Charles Clayton Morrison that suggests comparison with an Old Testament prophet. So intense in his moral convictions, so sure of his own position, so impatient with easy-going complacencies, so unqualified in his judgments, so forthright in utterance, he seems the kind of personality that we find in Isaiah or Amos.

The subject to which Dr. Morrison turns his probing mind is the state of American Protestantism. His first focus of attention is the shortcomings of our denominational system; his second, the kind of united Protestantism which should be sought. He makes a frontal attack on the whole idea that a group of independent denominations can constitute "the Church of Christ." You may disagree with Dr. Morrison but you cannot ignore him. He is provocative, challenging, disturbing, but never negligible.

If you do not happen to be much interested in the subject of Christian unity you should not, for that reason, brush Dr. Morrison's book aside without a second thought. For while such is its chief concern, it has another thread which is of its warp-and-woof. This is the essential contrast between the genius of Protestantism and the genius of Roman Catholicism. The popular idea that Catholicism represents unity in a way that Protestantism cannot is left without a leg to stand on.

In his interpretation of Protestantism, Dr. Morrison starts from a position that will surprise many—viz. that the Reformation was not divisive but truly ecumenical in spirit and intent. He sees the Reformers as struggling for the kind of Church in which there could be a vital Christian unity. That is why he calls his book *The Unfinished Reformation.* He means to imply that the ecumenical movement rather than the denominational pattern is of the true nature of Protestantism.

Our denominational system, as such, Dr. Morrison regards, as "a decadent survival of an era that is past." Our divisions of today, whatever be true of the past, are described as "unnecessary," "unworthy," "deplorable," "sinful." In a series of nine propositions he indicts the denominational system. It is "wasteful of Protestant resources." It is an "embarrassment" on the mission field. It weakens our social witness. It "provincializes Protestant thought." It denies breadth of outlook and fellowship to the local congregation.

The thing that Dr. Morrison finds fatefully wrong is the "churchism" of the denominations. By this he means that each denomination has arrogated to itself prerogatives that belong to the Church of Christ as a whole. A denomination, he argues, as a man-made institution, has no right to regard itself as self-sufficient or autonomous, and when it performs functions which really belong to the ecumenical church (such as baptism, ordination or the formulation of creeds), these functions become shorn of their ecumenical character.

On the positive side Dr. Morrison is convinced that, in a united church which conserves the great Protestant insights and understands the meaning of Christian freedom, there will be a quality of spiritual life and experience far exceeding anything that a denominational church can provide. Protestant faith, life and organization are set in pronounced contrast with Roman Catholicism at many points, but especially so in the way in which Catholicism virtually splits the Christian community into two, the hierarchial part of which rules, while the lay part has no role in the conduct of church affairs.

The assumption that we can "get back to the primitive Church" as a basis of unity is shown to be untenable. So also is the assumption that there must be theological agreement before there can be unity. The one thing needful, according to Dr. Morrison, is to recognize that loyalty to Jesus Christ is the sole bond of union and that we need "no constitutional authority save the sovereign authority of Christ." He sees this to be increasingly recognized in all denominations and it is in this that his main hope lies.

ALTON M. MOTTER.

ROUNDUP

JOYOUS ADVENTURE. By **David A. MacLennan.** Harper, $2.50. **MacLennan** has the gift. He knows how to find texts, not as pretexts for topics, but epitome texts that help keep the exegetical process from scattering. Here is a sense of direction, unified in a text, developed in terms of the context, illuminated by life (history, biography, experience) and applied to daily experience in terms of sympathetic common sense and challenging idealism. The fragrance of the heather, the tang of the big cedars, the clang of the trolleys and the diligent quiet of the study are all revealed as the habitation of this man's spirit. Imagination plus facts and figures, dreams *and* data, star gazing *and* hill climbing, spirituality and a feeling of solid reality—a rare combination, it is all here. The very title of the book suggests it, and the contents bears it out.

The pastor is revealed, the professor is not eclipsed, and the preacher is at his best; but in and beyond all we feel the presence of a companion who, with enthusiasm, follows the Leader who has gone ahead, saying to us in the words of Bunyan's pilgrim, "Wherever I have seen the print of His shoe in the earth, there have I desired to set my foot also."—*Jesse Halsey, Prof. Emeritus of Pastoral Theology, McCormick Theological Seminary, Chicago, Ill.*

★A FAITH FOR TOUGH TIMES. By **Harry Emerson Fosdick.** Harper, $1.75. A Fosdick book is always an occasion. This volume consists of Dr. Fosdick's three lectures delivered last year at the Pacific School of Religion. Ministers will find this great American preacher's moral sensitivity to the needs of our age, along with his wide use of timely illustrations and quotations, a valuable homiletical asset.—*Alton M. Motter, Associate Editor,* The Pulpit.

THE COMPANION BIBLE. By **William A. Cocke.** Winston, $3.50. Here is a fascinating, inspiring and instructive attempt to bring brevity to the King James Bible by using a proofreader's shears on three-fourths of it. Serviceable explanatory notes are aptly placed. To omit Psalms 34, 51 and 130 from a listing of half of the Psalter is a bit mystifying, and to find only three scant pages from the minor prophets, when all the Proverbs are employed, is still more so. However, the merits of this compilation far outweigh its few defects. It is an outstanding value for the money.—*James V. Claypool, Secretary, American Bible Society, Chicago, Illinois.*

(★★★★You can't afford to be without it; ★★★Unusually valuable to the preacher; ★★Above average in its field; ★A good buy; No Star, depends on your taste and need.)

Books Preachers Are Reading

March	April	This Month	*An analysis based on reports from leading religious booksellers and from the reading of the Pulpit's distinguished editorial associates and book reviewers.*
8	4	1	**Joyous Adventure.** *David A. McLennan. Harper,* $2.50
3	2	2	**Rediscovering Jesus.** *Jack Finegan. Association Press,* $2.50
	8	3	**Jesus Christ and His Cross.** *F. W. Dillistone. Westminster,* $2.50
		4	**The Resurrection and the Life.** *Leslie D. Weatherhead. Abingdon-Cokesbury,* $1.00
7	6	5	**Fulfill Thy Ministry.** *C. S. Neill. Harper,* $2.00
9	7	6	**Ride the Wild Horses.** *J. Wallace Hamilton. Revell,* $2.50
	9	7	**Here Is My Method.** *Donald Macleod. Revell,* $2.50
10	10	8	**Citizens of the World.** *Stringfellow Barr. Doubleday,* $3.00
		9	**The Gospels.** *Translated by J. B. Phillips. Macmillan,* $2.75
		10	**The Interpreter's Bible.** *Vol. 1 Abingdon-Cokesbury,* $8.75

The Editor's Page

The Event of the Month

BY THE TIME these words are read the prospects of an armistice in Korea will be either brighter or darker than in these early days of April. But at this moment it seems that the whole world is in an expectant mood. The proposal made by the Chinese communist premier for the settlement of the issue on which negotiations broke down last October, has been received with hope that a new spirit now actuates the two communist governments, China and Russia. President Eisenhower has announced that he proposes to accept this overture at its face value until it is discredited by contrary deeds. It seems to me that the plan to repatriate all prisoners who wish to go home, and to ask a neutral government to decide the fate of the rest—some 51,000 Chinese and North Korean men in our prison camps—fully satisfies the moral and humane considerations which have hitherto blocked action. The main features of this offer were formerly rejected by the two Red governments. The present offer clearly indicates a genuine change of mind. Our people have long since become accustomed, and justly so, to expect a joker in any plan put forward with Russian backing. The result is that the inhibitions on our reciprocity are not easily dislodged. But many factors contribute to a hopeful mood. (1) The passing of Stalin, (2) the possibility that the Russian people are pretty tired of carrying the enormous burden of militarism, (3) the unlikelihood that Malenkov, the new dictator, is resting comfortably upon either popular or oligarchical support, (4) the likelihood that Mao Tse-tung will seize this moment to declare communist China free of Soviet domination—these inspire hope that a settlement of the Korean war is not far off.

Red China Offers Peace in Korea

The Book of the Month

GOD'S ORDER—THE EPHESIAN LETTER AND THE PRESENT TIME, *By John A. Mackay. Macmillan, $3.00.*

AFTER READING about twenty pages of this book I abruptly stopped and asked myself: Can it be that in my lifetime reading of the Bible I missed so much of the unique grandeur of Ephesians? I closed the book, got down my New Testament, reread the entire Letter and returned to the book with keen expectation. The claims that Dr. Mackay had made for the Letter in his first chapter were documented and confirmed by his interpretation of the Letter itself. What were these claims? (1) Ephesians comes nearer being a systematic statement of the Christian faith than any other book in the New Testament. (2) The "system," however, was not the product of speculative reasoning, but of revelation. Paul therefore did not *argue* it; he *proclaimed* it. (3) The proclamation took the majestic form of a liturgy rather than a logical development of ideas. Paul, a prisoner in Rome, "hurls his heart into a paean" of thanksgiving for God's great act in Jesus Christ. This act had opened up to Christian faith a world view in which the simple apostolic creed that "Christ is Lord" was given cosmic application. (4) The Ephesian Letter is not only a liturgy, but a song. It presents a Christianity that sings! And this, says the author, is the faith that will rescue modern man from the pit of nihilism and pessimism into which he has fallen.

A Thought for the Month

FOR THE FIRST TIME in the forty-year history of the ecumenical movement, its plenary assembly will be held in our hemisphere when the World Council of Churches meets in Evanston, Illinois, in August 1954. American Protestantism is looking forward to this event with high hopes tinged, however, with some anxiety concerning what effect a close-up view of its proceedings will have upon the more advanced movement in this country for the union of the churches. In these proceedings the assumption appeared to be that doctrinal differences must all be ironed out before a united church can be achieved. But the ecumenical spirit is now seeking a more promising approach to its goal. It is not satisfied to continue asking the question: How can Christ's people reconcile their differences so that they can live together in one ecclesiastical fellowship? Another question is taking form: How can a united church be conceived in which Christ's people can live together in one ecclesiastical fellowship so that they can *grow together* in spirit, in thought, in action and in solidarity? The first question assumes that we must reconcile our differences in order to have a united church. The second assumes that many of our differences cannot be reconciled except in the fellowship of an achieved united church. Both questions must be asked and answered together. But we may hope that the Evanston assembly will place its greater emphasis on the second question, because it has lain so long unasked. Only if it does so, will the American churches reap the benefit they anticipate from the presence of this great gathering among us.

Two Approaches to Church Union

Charles Clayton Morrison

For the Record—

WHEN a new managing editor begins his duties, it is expected that he will share some of his hopes and dreams with his readers. In this brief inaugural I would like to say that the external appearance of The Pulpit will probably change very little. But it would be unfair to say that no changes are in the making. They are. Our readers may expect the kind of changes that we hope will come from a Pulpit which has not only a new *look* but a new *feel.*

These anticipated changes will deal basically with the *content* of both sermons and articles. We hope to exert greater efforts in securing manuscripts which will reflect our *best* contemporary preaching. By "best" we mean preaching which deals with the deep struggles of the human soul and which has demonstrated its ability to communicate with people living in this complex and confused age.

It is our feeling that homiletical essays, however perfect, will not meet the rigorous spiritual demands of our time. Consequently, The Pulpit's test of a sermon will be: Does this Word of God speak to our condition? Is it styled in a language that can be clearly understood? Does it really count? Is it vital? Does it move on to some of the issues of our civilization which have now become "soul-sized?"

Alert to New Writers

We are also anticipating some changes in the nature of our feature articles. While many of these articles will continue to deal with various aspects of preaching itself, we shall seek to discover also manuscripts which will deal more creatively with other areas of the preacher's life and work.

This is because no man's sermons can ever be separated from his life. There is great rejoicing in this office when we can pass to our fellow ministers articles such as "Can a Preacher Also Be Saved?" "The Authority of the Modern Preacher," "Should Ministers Be Neurotic?" and "The Problem of No Revolution," to mention only a few which have appeared during recent months.

We shall be especially alert to articles which reflect the Church's cutting edge as it seeks more effective ways of interpreting its timeless gospel. This means that we will be particularly receptive to the writer who has deep spiritual vision and insight, but whose message has not yet been widely presented or accepted. The results of congregational experiments or of research projects of theological and postgraduate students also will find a warm reception.

In brief, The Pulpit hopes not only to *maintain* but to *strengthen* its position as the indispensable journal for those preachers who want their ministry to count most for the Kingdom of God.

A. M. M.

The Pulpit

A Journal of Contemporary Preaching

Founded 1929

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